



THE ONLY PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE WITH A DEMO CD EVERY MONTH

TOMB RAIDER, Porsche Challenge, Pandemonium ALL PLAYABLE

SPECIAL DOUBLE-COVER EDITION

Official UK

PlayStation

No. 15

If you think you're hard enough...

EXCLUSIVE RELOADED
REVIEW AND DEMO

REVIEWED:

RELOADED

NAMCO MUSEUM VOLUME 3

AYRTON SENNA KART DUEL

FIFA '97

SUIKODEN

PROJECT X2

COMMAND & CONQUER

CONTRA

ISS DELUXE

TEMPEST X

IRON & BLOOD

NBA '97

WWF: IN YOUR HOUSE

RIOT

The **ULTIMATE**
1997 preview

A complete guide to
next year's releases

The **BIG match**

International Superstar
Soccer vs FIFA '97

Leading Role

Suikoden - the first
PlayStation RPG review

The World's Best-Selling PlayStation Magazine

PSM WISHES YOU A HAPPY NEW YEAR

JANUARY 1997 £4.99 | US \$10.95 | GUILDERS 21.50 | 399BEF





Name

To: Warwickshire County Council

Department of Health

Petition against Dominic Wheadon

We, the undersigned, wish to submit an official complaint against Mr Dominic Wheadon of 13 Turret Grove, Coventry.

Despite repeated requests from residents Mr Wheadon refuses to remove the 25ft hardboard Venus Fly Trap, pig and palm tree from his garden. The said monstrosities attract hordes of undesirable tourists to the street and causes frequent disruption in an otherwise quiet, respectable area.

Mr Wheadon also refuses to remove the skunks, turtles and bandicoots which continually escape from his garden and foul the footpaths and grass verges.

Lastly we would demand that Mr Wheadon be restrained from playacting scenes from "Crash Bandicoot", the PlayStation video game in his garden, as he creates noise and disturbance all night long, lowering the tone of the neighbourhood.

Name

Address

G. Mann Smackley-Gram	17 Turret Grove
David Smackley-Gram	
Mr Joseph Brenham	
Professor C. Hobsbaum	
Mrs. J. Hobsbaum	3 St. John's Way
Mrs. W. Collins	14 Carnegie House, Inglewood Rd.
Mr. G.C. Collins	14 Carnegie Hse. Inglewood Rd.
Braverton Cobb	26 Chester Close
George Hilly Rayner	26 Chester Close
JUDGE A. HIGGINS	4 Plympton Ave
	40 Inglewood Road
	32 Turret

SONY



DO NOT
UNDERESTIMATE
THE POWER
OF PLAYSTATION

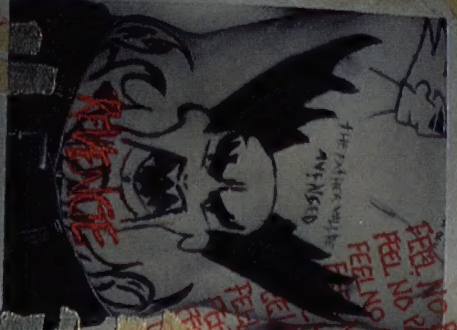
SOON MY MASTERSHIP
WILL BE COMPLETE



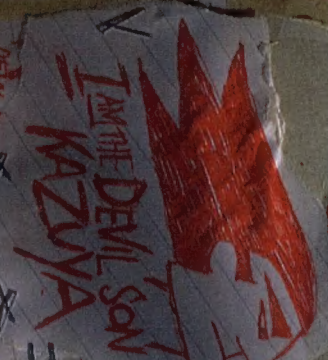
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[illegible]

THE SMOKEHAWK PISTOL
ATTACK HAS LEFT ME WEAK
BUT I WILL CONTINUE THE
FIGHT - THE QUEST
MUST CONTINUE
THE FIGHT GOES ON



I AM THE DEVIL'S SON
KAZUYA



DEAL SON
DEUIL SON
DEUIL SON

The image shows a close-up of a book's endpaper. The paper is covered in a dense, repeating pattern of the words "victory" and "medal". The words are written in a stylized, calligraphic font. The pattern is arranged in a grid-like fashion, with the words alternating in color (black and brown/gold) and orientation. A small, dark, rectangular object, possibly a bookmark or a piece of tape, is visible near the center of the page.

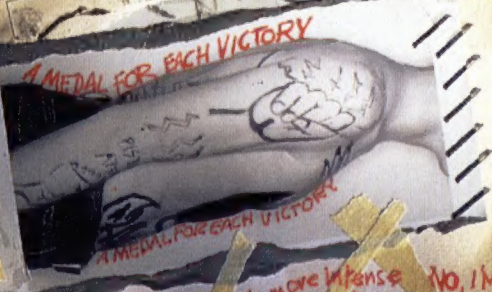
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LAUNCHED
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MIGHTY
DEEDS
RIBBED AS
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THE MAN, said to be in his late
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into an early evening game before
being charged with the
use of a dangerous weapon.
The police have been warned not
to approach him.

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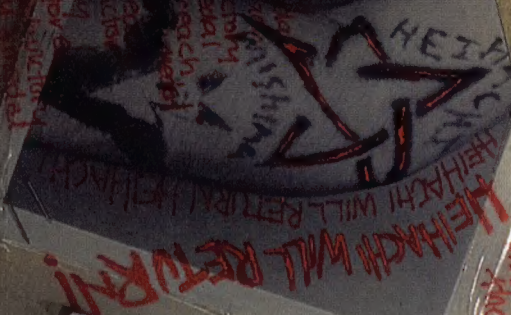
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WILL AVENG



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[Handwritten red ink markings on the bottom edge of the page:]

RETURN
JANSON

THE SINS
-THE SINS-

will be visit

Highlights



38 Cool Boarders

A whole new slant on the racing game with a rip-roaring cooler-shaker of a title. Downhill fun is to be had on page 38, and you can also find out what a 'fakie' and a 'goofy' are.

52 The 1997 Preview

It's the ultimate guide to what you'll be playing in 1997 and what we'll be writing about. Essential reading.



72 Reloaded

This month's cover-title is the much-awaited sequel to Gremlin's best-selling game ever. With more blood and more puzzles than before, is it time to get loaded again? Find out for yourself on page 72 with our exclusive review.

16-40 PrePlay

This month we have our first play of *Legacy Of Kain*, *Jonah Lomu Rugby*, *Tenka*, *Tobal No1* and *Total Drivin'*. Plus a round-up of EA's latest releases, including *Darklight*.



71-105 PlayTest

As well as *Reloaded*, we have the first PlayStation RPG, *Suikoden*, and a battle royal between *FIFA '97* and *ISS Deluxe*. *Command & Conquer* also makes its PlayStation debut.

Another year over and a new one just begun, as somebody once said. And what a year we expect it to be for the PlayStation. By the time you read this, there should be 750,000 PlayStation owners in the UK – and with that many fans to satisfy, there'll be a lot of money spent on creating an abundance of games over the next twelve months. If you turn to page 52 you'll find 11 pages worth of them, as we give you a month-by-month breakdown of what to expect on the PlayStation in 1997, in the ultimate preview of the year.

One of the big games for 1997 is already with us, however, as *Reloaded* blasts its way on to our cover this month (both of them, in fact). Not only do we have the exclusive review of Gremlin's much-awaited sequel, but we also have the exclusive playable demo to go with it.

You'll also find playable demos of *Porsche Challenge*, *Tomb Raider* and *Pandemonium* on the disc, which is possibly the best we've ever done.

So, although 1996 was a fantastic year for the PlayStation, 1997 is already shaping up to be even better. With that in mind, rest assured that you *will* be having a Happy New Year.

Rob Pegley

Rob Pegley (Editor)



8 world stadiums,
accurate ball dynamics



22 intelligent motion-
captured opponents

ITF Reigning champion*, there's only one player that leads the world: Pete Sampras, and there's only one smash, hit tennis game: **Sampras Extreme Tennis**.

"The shot system is incredibly instinctive, with smashes and lobs pulled off with ease, and net play requiring all the fast reflexes of the real thing... the crowd even gasp if the ball tips the net! Every aspect of the game is polished until it shines"

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Mean Machines PlayStation



There's only one smash, hit.



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Officially licensed by Pete Sampras
ITF World Reigning champion*

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ABC Jan-Jun 96 51,444

PrePlay

16 EA line-up

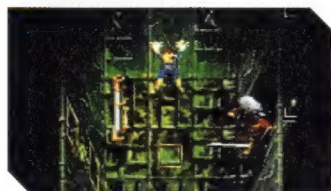


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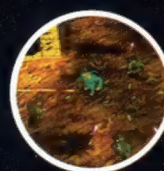
This has got to be the best disc we've done yet, just in terms of the number of playable demos we have of top-quality games. Four of the most important titles on the PlayStation plus *Lomax*! An early version of *Porsche Challenge* will give you a taster of what to expect in 1997, while *Tomb Raider* and *Pandemonium* end 1996 in fine style. If you haven't got them yet then these demos may finally convince you of their worth. Also on the disc is a playable demo of *Reloaded* to go with our exclusive review. Finally a gentle game of *Lomax* should set you up nicely for 1997. Surely these discs can't get any better? Well, yes, actually they can, watch this space next month for details of our next superb demo.



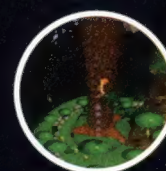
Porsche Challenge



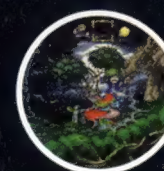
Tomb Raider



Reloaded



Pandemonium



Lomax



Now there's a white one!

Sony to release white PlayStation

Last month we reported on the new black PlayStation, Yaroze. This month there is a white one to bring you news of. The chances are, however, that it won't be released in this country and so anybody wanting to purchase one would have to bring it in from Asia, where it is to be sold.

The machine will be MPEG-compatible, thus allowing CD films to be played through the console, and it will also boast vastly improved

The machine will be MPEG-compatible, allowing CD films to be played through the console

chip-based security within its casing.

The reason for its release in Asia only is two-fold. Firstly the fact that CD films are hugely popular there means that any consoles using MPEG in the past



[1] First came the standard grey one that we have come to know and love. **[2]** Then last month we brought you news of Yaroze, the black PlayStation that could make you rich and famous. Now it's white.

have sold incredibly well. In Europe and the States, video is by far the most popular medium for films and as a result systems such as CDi have not been so successful.

The second reason is related to the extra security chips that the machine contains.

Although in this country there are concerns over piracy and Sony have been taking steps to eradicate it, in Asia the problem is massive. With Sony losing large sums of cash as a result, they have wisely decided to try and stem the problem at a hardware

The white PlayStation will only be released in Asia for the present time as it is suited to their tastes and market conditions far more than the USA or Europe. If demand is great enough though, then who knows?

level rather than try and rely on legislation.

At the moment there are no plans to release the white PlayStation outside of Asia and chances are that MPEG will probably never become mainstream in this country due to the advent of DVD with its potential for greater storage. There is, however, a strong possibility that the protection chips could be included in future regular PlayStations, but again this will depend on how great Sony believe the potential for revenue loss is due to bootlegging.

Probably worth mentioning, finally, is the controversy surrounding the updated PlayStations which are now being sold with new chrome optical disc drives, as we mentioned in News last month. This is simply a standard upgrading which any product might get as its learning curve progresses and is not, as some magazines have reported, an admission on Sony's part that the original PlayStation design was faulty – hope that puts a few minds at rest.



New twist to racing game

Metal goes on tour

Having successfully chased road rage off the streets of Southern California, the authorities have succeeded only in spreading the problem world-wide. Which luckily means we get to play *Twisted Metal World Tour*.

The mad drivers have taken their car combat on to the Parisian walkways and snowy wastes, turning the whole world into an accident black spot.

The game, set for release in February, is said to have had major gameplay enhancements, as well as boasting smoother graphics, improved control and more tactical use of weaponry.

The multi-level 3D battlegrounds provide total freedom of movement to hunt and be hunted and the venues taken in include New York, Paris, Holland,

Moscow, Columbia, Hong Kong and Antarctica. There are also three hidden levels to discover. And with 12 new vehicles, you could be driving either a hearse, a bulldozer or even an Indy 500 race car among others.

One to two players can take part and we'll hopefully bring you a full PrePlay over the coming months.



Twisted Metal World Tour even turns Antarctica into an accident black-spot.



[1] Spanish Blood is a pirate-based game, [2] while Aqua is about scuba-diving. Are these your fantasies?



Scavenger create 'interest'

New Playstation player

Little known American publishers Scavenger are set to unveil a whole portfolio of games which they have created, based around what they call 'universal fantasies'.

Their goal was to come up with a videogame for various fans which will suit their individual specific interests. This is nothing new and most developers create a videogame around an already popular medium, but setting out to

create a whole range of games could be a bold move.

Scavenger have come up with the following games (in brackets) for the 'interest groups': Scuba Diving (*Aqua*), Fire Fighting (*Pyro*), Astronauts (*Gemin*), Dungeons and Dragons (*Into the Shadows*), Spiders (*Tarantula*), Robotics (*Amok*), Paranormal (*Angel*), Speedbikes (*Scorcher*), Fetish (*Terminus*), Cops (*Sniper*) and Pirates (*Spanish Blood*). Interested?



A pair of Telstars

Excalibur 2555AD and Wreckin' Crew

Telstar have two very promising releases lined up for March 1997, with *Excalibur 2555AD* and *Wreckin' Crew* both set to impress.

Wreckin' Crew is an arcade-style, 3D racing game which also includes stunt-driving and a 16-player link-up option. Set in four worlds, you get to drive many different stylised vehicles ranging from a 1957 Chevrolet to a beaten-up Ford pickup, each obviously with their own strengths and weaknesses. Stunt tracks, hidden levels and especially the 16-player demolition-derby competition should make this a popular game

for the new year.

On a completely different subject matter, Telstar's other big release is set to be *Excalibur 2555AD*. The game is an adventure which sees you encounter 80 different characters and over 600 locations as you try to recover the legendary sword of Excalibur. In the role of Merlin's humble apprentice you must fight your way through a fantasy world inhabited by Ort peasants, Elsyians and Fabian freedom fighters, with only limited spellcasting ability and a trusty broadsword as



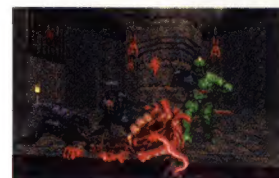
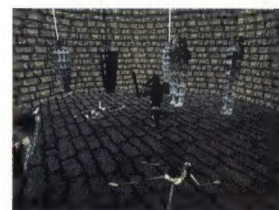
[1] Excalibur 2555AD doesn't seem right, really. [2] Surely the Arthurian legend won't be hot news in the future? Then again, it's lasted this long.

your weapons. We feel the idea is a little unsound and that Arthurian legends should be left in the past, but who are we to argue if they come up with a decent game.

The true 3D engine gives an excellent feeling of freedom, and interaction with the characters gives a great sense of depth to the

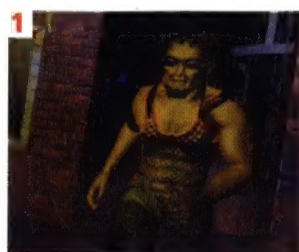
game. With intriguing puzzles, hand-to-hand combat and full speech throughout, this could be one to compete with *Broken Sword* in the new year.

PrePlays and full PlayTests should be forthcoming in the next two issues of *PSM* for both products.



After their past record, there was a joke going around the industry that Eidos had found *Tomb Raider* left on a train or something. With the amazing success of Lara Croft and her adventures, however, they are now a player to be taken very seriously indeed. And on the back of their current high-profile status, they have announced plans for their 1997 releases. *Shadow Warrior* is a *Doom*-style game in which you play a Ninja, one of a band of mercenaries hired to clear up unrest across a number of Japanese cities.

Also on the way are *Deathtrap Dungeon*, *Championship Manager 96/97*, *Swagman*, *Apache* and *Steel Legions* among others. For a full preview of Eidos' releases, and indeed all of 1997's releases, turn to page 52 for our ultimate guide.



[1] The game looks to be a mix of Broken Sword and Resident Evil. [2] Which will be great if they pull it off [Inset] Here's one of those Wreckin' Crew boys..

US Column

As ever PSM's man in the colonies has all the latest inside info on the PlayStation market, Stateside. Warning: Some of the games mentioned here may never appear in the UK!

More of the bigger companies here in the States are buying up developing teams so that they can have their own in-house games made. A recent example is BMG Interactive and BLAMI, who were a bunch of guys that had worked with Crystal Dynamics, and then went on to do projects for DreamWorks and SegaSoft. We tried to squeeze some pics out of them on their new working title for BMG due out in late '97, but the lawyers were not that keen. We do know, however, that it'll be a 3D action/adventure title for most of the video game platforms (meaning PlayStation, for sure), and we got this information from one of the founders, Jay Minn: 'We are targeting the Japanese and the European markets, as well as US gamers. All of our staff have grown up playing console games and we make sure to recruit folks who have a strong love of videogames'. Minn went on to say that their upcoming 3D action/adventure title for the PlayStation is inspired by the *Legend Of Zelda* for the SNES: 'Our title, of course, is not a sequel or anything like that, but we do fall in the same genre of single-character action/adventure with lots of environmental puzzles as well as huge bosses and monsters to fight'.



Konami's new Justifier weapon is a very cool-looking lightgun.



Nanotek Warriors, from Virgin, is a mix of classic arcade gameplay with today's sophisticated 3D graphics. Very similar to *Tempest X*, but with a far better look.



Contra: Legacy Of War (which is reviewed on page 88 this month) is proving a big hit in the States and its popularity is likely to increase even further this Xmas with the release of Konami's Justifier lightgun.



Every system has to have some kind of gun, don't it? Sega's had their orangey thing for a while and now the PlayStation gets the Justifier from Konami which looks much cooler but is still a straight-forward bang-banger. This makes it a lot more fun to use – and in a game like *Contra: Legacy Of War*, working a weapon is much more satisfying than a joystick.

Resident Evil did incredibly well in the States and we hear from you guys that the sequel is to be even better. Having now seen the game for ourselves we don't think anybody's gonna be disappointed. As you know by now, *Resident Evil 2* begins several months after the close of the Umbrella Corporation, the cause of all the evil in the first game. And whereas the action in *Resident Evil* took place in the mansion, the sequel takes place in a much larger environment. This time, a deadly disease has spread throughout the entire Raccoon City vicinity and mutants and zombies are popping up everywhere. *Resident Evil 2* provides players with a whole new cast of characters and puts them in even more danger and terror than before. Like the UK, we're getting very excited about the release of *Resident Evil 2*.

Nanotek Warriors is also getting us

fairly excited over here as well. Like *RE2*, it's another Virgin title, and one that's pretty cool and different. It mixes classic arcade gameplay with today's 3D graphics and technology to provide a gorgeous-looking blast of a game. Grady Hunt produced it and he says that the graphics are 'like nothing else you will see in any title on any game system. The retro gamer will really dig this title. It plays in the vein of *Tempest X* (see review on page 96), *Gradius* and *StarCastles*, with a little twist of *Galaga*'. All in all we expect it to be a mad Christmas here in the States and I'll be back next month to let you know what our top-selling game was.



Perfect timing

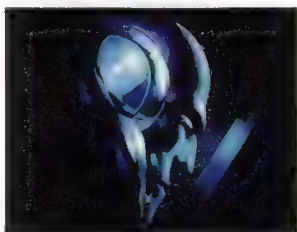
Grolier announce SFX adventure release

Perfect Assassin, Grolier Interactive's forthcoming PC release, is set to be converted for release on the PlayStation in time for the second quarter of 1997.

Developed by Synthetic Dimensions, it is a science fantasy adventure based on the original artwork and concepts of Kev Walker, the UK's leading fantasy artist. This month's hackneyed fantasy plot is full of the 'transient, ephemeral, mythical overlords and powerworld's' you'd expect, but when push comes to shove,

there's a goodie and a baddie at the root of it. The baddie is a mad meglomaniac, known as T'Promeil, who is hell-bent on world destruction, while the goodie – Charon – is the eponymous Perfect Assassin, hell-bent on T'Promeil's demise.

What follows is a complex storyline with a non-linear method of progression. All of this is set in detailed alien worlds with multi-camera, real-time perspectives and smoothly animated photo-realistic characters. We hope to have a full PrePlay within the next couple of issues.



More Actua sports

Tennis joins the club



Expect more motion-captured Actua sporting realism in 1997.



After the success of *Actua Soccer* and the release (finally) of *Actua Golf*, Gremlin are set to expand the *Actua* portfolio further with the release of *Actua Tennis*, *Actua Ice Hockey* and two more *Actua Soccer* titles.

The first to emerge will be *Actua Soccer Club Edition* which is due for release in April '97. This is an update of the original game but includes all the latest Premiership squads. The players will be displayed in 'Panini-style' photos and will have full statistics for every player. This will be followed late in the year by a fully-updated version of the game, likely to be simply titled *Actua Soccer 2*.

Motion-capture technology will be out in force again this summer with the release of *Actua Tennis*. Accuracy will certainly not be at the expense of playability, however, according to Gremlin. And with all the expected Singles and Doubles tournaments, full commentary and plenty of options, this should be a victory for common sense. Completing the set will be *Actua Ice Hockey* which will be released at the end of the year.



That tired old cartridge lying dormant in your wardrobe could be a museum exhibit, documenting the lifestyles and interests of young people in the Nineties, according to Jane Clarke, deputy director of the British Film Institute.

With the success of their Re-Play exhibition, which opened at the end of November, the BFI are making sure that classic games are not lost forever by creating a games archive containing titles right up to the present day. Around 80 per cent of films from the silent-films era are missing and the BFI are anxious that a similar situation does not occur with videogames.

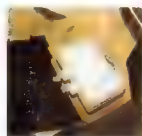
Space is therefore being set aside for games cartridges, cassettes, discs and machines, and so far they have collected some 2000 games together with a small number of machines. The BFI would be delighted to hear from anyone with old games stored away in the attic or perhaps an old Saturn that was heading for a car-boot sale. Contact Tony Hetherington at the BFI, 21 Stephen Street, London W1P 2LN, with any donations.

Max power

Big toys for big boys

There is in-car entertainment and there is in-car entertainment. What Autoleck have been doing with PlayStations recently, however, is something else again. For a very reasonable fee the Kent-based company have been installing PlayStations and screens inside cars so that back-seat drivers really can be back-seat drivers. By installing an inverter, the PlayStation can be made to run off the car battery, and by rigging the console up to the car stereo, brilliant surround sound can be achieved.

Autoleck say that they can fit the set-up into any car, no matter what size, and although there can be problems with the angle of screens – which are best viewed straight-on – they've had no complaints to date. Their latest project is to be the Sierra Predator which will include two TV screens connected to a 1000 watt hi-fi system for an awesome gaming experience. More details of this brilliant idea can be obtained from Autoleck on 0181 303 1981.



Where do you play with your console? We'd like to know. Send us details of your preferred PlayStation venue, what's in your collection and details about your self (age, occupation etc) and we'll barge *Hello*-like into your house, brandishing camera and tape recorder. You have the right to remain silent but anything you do say will be taken down and printed in the mag. So drop us a line, and we'll be round to make you a star forthwith.



"TRULY EXCELLENT IN EVERY WAY"

PlayStation Plus 90%

Broken Sword
THE SHADOW OF THE TEMPLARS

full of mystery and suspense".
"Mean Machines PlayStation 90%"

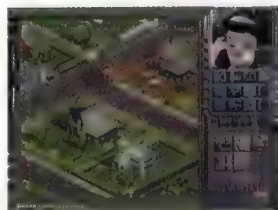
DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF PLAYSTATION

Top 10

The Gallup top 10 of PlayStation games on sale now. With last month's placings in brackets.

1. (NE) Tomb Raider (Core Design)
2. (NE) FIFA '97 (Electronic Arts)
3. (NE) Die Hard Trilogy (Electronic Arts)
4. (NE) Soviet Strike (Electronic Arts)
5. (1) Formula 1 (Psygnosis)
6. (RE) Crash Bandicoot (SCEE)
7. (2) Tekken 2 (SCEE)
8. (3) Wipeout 2097 (Psygnosis)
9. (8) Actua Soccer (Gremlin)
10. (4) Resident Evil (Virgin)

ChartTrack



More Constructor

shots have reached PSM Central and very nice the game looks too. Described (by us) as 'Sim City gone bad', the game allows you to build cities and compete against fellow town-planners by whichever means you care to use. Dirty tricks abound and good fun is had by all. Until we have a full PrePlay, just luxuriate in these new shots.

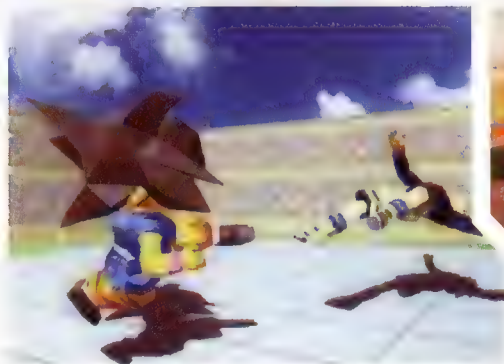
JAPAN Column

More news from the East on what's going to be big. Warning: Some of the games mentioned here may never appear in the UK!

This winter Sony seem to be the favourite to top the best-seller lists – already, more than 75 per cent of software sales during November are credited to the PlayStation. With an impressively strong Xmas line-up, Sony look like they'll walk it.

Coming soon, *Running High* is a racing game from Rex, but with a bizarre twist – the player doesn't drive a vehicle, they run instead! There are five different characters, each with different physical abilities and, like *ESPN Extreme Sport*, the player will be able to punch rival competitors. The gameplay is pretty interesting and the characters well-animated, while there are a variety of different courses – one is set in glass tubes under the sea. It's one to watch for.

Namco have yet another possible blockbuster on their hands – frantic shoot 'em up *Xevious 3D/G*. First appearing in Japanese arcades some 13 years ago, this PlayStation version, sub-named *Perfect Collection*, gathers together the four adaptations of *Xevious* in one tidy package. The game style will stay the same, with both airborne and ground-based targets, but *Xevious 3D/G* will feature new weapons like an intelligent laser. Interactive backgrounds, such as falling boulders, will influence the gameplay, and the perspective has been improved, with zoom effects being used to the full. Bosses are polygon-based and impressive with it, while



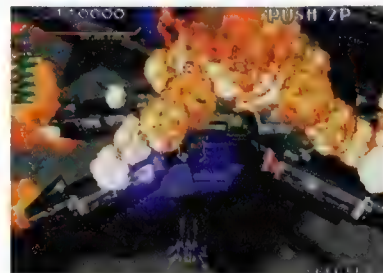
special effects are elaborate and numerous.

Bandai's *Dragon Ball GT* is the latest addition to the highly popular *Dragon Ball* series. First published in *Jump Weekly* as a graphic novella, it didn't take long for Bandai to turn the idea into a game. It sees character Son Goku transformed into a child after a tragic incident with black crystal balls, and to find his adult shape he has to travel the universe in order to find some, erm, new balls. It is a 3D polygon-based fighting game, with emphasis on the gameplay rather than graphical excellence. Characters and backgrounds will be familiar to fans of the *DBZ* series, while traditional special attacks and flying abilities will also remain. However, motion-capture technology has been used to modernise the character's movements.

Konami's *Metal Gear* is a very popular Japanese title, first appearing on the MSX-2 in July 1987. A sequel, *Metal Gear Solid Snake*, materialised a couple of years later and then the concept went in to hibernation – until now. The success of *Metal Gear* was due to its dramatic scenarios, and the PlayStation adaptation will be no different. The player can move freely about a pseudo 3D environment in search of enemies, but for PlayStation veterans the quality of the polygon environment will be disappointing. However there are nice cut-scenes and good, solid gameplay which will save *Metal Gear*.

From Software have two new titles on the boil – *Armoured Force* and *Shadow Tower*, both to be released in Spring 1997. *Armoured Force* is an interesting action/shooting game featuring Virtual-On type of robots (whatever they may be) where the player can build their own robot before taking it into battle. Missions are set in a variety of locations, including desert and cityscapes, and the game will feature a link-up mode for added involvement. *Shadow Tower*, on the other hand, is along the same lines as From Software's highly successful *Kings Field* series. The engine and mapping system is different from *Kings Field*, however, giving *Shadow Tower* a more dramatic atmosphere but the story is still very mysterious. This time the main hero is battling the Devil

Ray Storm is the latest in the Ray Force series of shoot 'em ups.



himself, with hordes of his minions having been sent to slow the warrior down. A promising Dungeon-based RPG.

A PlayStation adaptation of *Ray Storm* finally arrives on Playstation in January, complete with arcade-perfect graphics and great gameplay. *Ray Storm* is the latest addition to Taito's 2D vertical scrolling *Ray Force* series of shoot 'em ups, but with a wealth of enhancements *Ray Storm* looks totally modern. The PlayStation version will allow two player games, but with only eight stages to battle through the game's longevity could be in question. It can be enough for the arcade but a little bit short for a console game. *Ray Storm* still promises to be a big hit.

Koei are to tackle a new approach from their usual strategy angle by contributing to the beat 'em up genre with *Sangoku Musou*. Graphically it is quite splendid, with motion-captured characters wielding huge weapons shadowed by gorgeous background detailing such as blazing sunsets or cherry blossom trees glistening in the moonlight! The look is certainly appealing but, specialising mainly in simulation war-games, it will be interesting to see how Koei adapt to this market.

More air-combat action comes from Pack In Video with *Wing Over*. Using popular historical aircraft specs the player will have construct a small squadron of four aircraft from a line-up of 16 to use in the missions. From this team you then have to select the most appropriate plane for each mission, which could involve air-to-ground or air-to-air combat. *Wing Over* will be one of the first games to cater to Sony's new dual-handed analogue joystick when released this Xmas.

Finally Sony have their own game due for an imminent release, *Ragna Coeur*. Bearing similarities to Konami's *Vandal Heart*, *Ragna Coeur* is shaping up to be a really good, and extremely large, polygon RPG. Each character has their own physical parameters which will play an important role during the course of the game. Some of you may notice that *Ragna Coeur* has been delayed considerably, but this is due to Sony concentrating on other in-house developments such as *RooRoo*, *Kenshin* and *Koowlon's Gate*. More news on those at a later date...

Crazy Chase 2 from Kemco, Dragon Ball GT from Bandai and Wing Over are all hitting the Japanese market in 1997.



2097 tour proves real hit

Fluke success for *Wipeout*

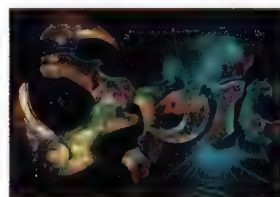
Well you couldn't really go wrong with a combination of lovely ladies, exciting videogame action, great sounds and a few beers. Nevertheless, the recent *Wipeout 2097*/Red Bull club tour surpassed all expectations, with venues in Bristol, Slough, Manchester, Reading, Glasgow and Leeds all packed out for the event. Biggest attendance of all was at Cream in Liverpool, where 3000

people turned up for the event, and as you can see from our shots, the proverbial good time was had by all.

Hopefully more music-and-videogames crossover nights will be forthcoming as a result of the success and more companies will no doubt look into the possibilities for promoting their products to an adult public.

Included in part of the *Wipeout 2097* tour success story is the fact that the group Fluke, one of the artists on the game and album, achieved their first ever top-twenty entry with the track Atom Bomb as a result of the success.

The video produced by the band to promote the single included an array of *Wipeout 2097* game shots and rendered images. Both Glen O'Connell, PR manager with Psygnosis, and Julian Nugent, from the band, were happy with the reciprocal achievements that they have helped each other achieve and more projects are likely to be forthcoming. Expect more games out on the road.



BMG Interactive have teamed up with Boss Game Studios for their latest project and are set to release *Spider* in February as a result.

Not a massive name in the world of videogames, Boss Film Studios – the motion picture arm of the corporation – are responsible for visual extravaganzas such as *Species*, *True Lies*, *Multiplicity* and *Cliffhanger*. With such a pedigree of stunning films, it is possible that *Spider* will far surpass BMG's last release, *Pandemonium*, which would be no mean feat.

The striking imagery will not be at the expense of gameplay, however, according to Colin Gordon, Boss's vice president, who believes that 'the bottom line is gameplay'. He adds that 'cool graphics, features and a great story are important extras'.

In *Spider*, players must travel through 3D levels in six 3D real-words, encased in the body of a cybernetic tarantula as they chase the kidnappers of their original human body. Phase bats, mecha wasps and other artificial-life experiments are encountered on their travels. Sounds great – expect a PrePlay to follow.

In *Power* this month

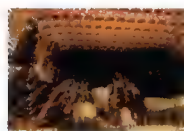
and *Essential* stuff

If *Tomb Raider* has got you pulling your hair out in frustration, then let *PlayStation Power* take the strain this month with their superb player's guide. The whole thing is solved, so read that and stop phoning us! For flight fans, all of the moves from *MK Trilogy* are also included, together with a review of *Tobal No 1*. Plus there's an exclusive *Tenka* preview, and for new owners there's a guide to everything you need to know about the console.

For those that haven't yet invested, the second issue of *Essential PlayStation* is also still on sale at all good newsagents with another disc containing 10 top demos. Well worth checking out now!

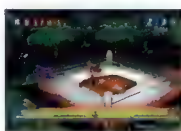


PlayStation Magazine Recommends



Tomb Raider

Yes, you're sick of hearing it, but this really is the PlayStation game to buy if you haven't got it. A brilliant adventure for players of all ages which combines breathtaking visuals with an intuitive control system and huge levels. We're still playing this and you should be too.



Victory Boxing

Deserving of its StarPlayer award due to the rewarding battles in which you become embroiled, the longer you persist. Slick and polished, this is an excellent reason for not writing the words *Tekken 2* in this section yet again. A great alternative to true beat 'em ups.



Pandemonium

Is it better than *Crash*? Well, yes, we think so. Basically a 2D platformer, but it looks gorgeous enough to convince you it's 3D – which in the absence of a true 3D platformer will do for us. Huge and absorbing it is also a visual treat which should be high on your 'wanted' list.



Wipeout 2097

Fancy a racing game to see in the New Year? Look no further. Well, possibly look at *F1*, but either one of the Psygnosis pair will keep you more than happy. Thumping soundtrack, fantastic speed, smooth graphics and, well, it's just loads of fun.

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DESTRUCTION DERBY 2

PrePlay | EA line-up



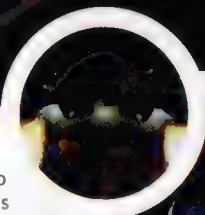
With the **space combat epic** *Wing Commander IV* indefinitely on hold, EA fill the space with a similarly styled **sci-fi blast 'em up** from the UK and an **assorted trio** from the States

Darklight

■ PUBLISHER:	EA
■ DEVELOPER:	Rage
■ RELEASE DATE:	February
■ ORIGIN:	United Kingdom

It probably enrages the programmers at Rage no end, but it's inevitable that their new glossy, space-based shoot 'em up will at some point be compared to Origin's seminal *Wing Commander* series. After all, it too is set in space, is essentially a shoot 'em up, is mission-based, and is teaming with aliens intent on seeing your atoms scattered into oblivion.

Darklight's polished PC origins are visibly evident in this well-rounded version



There is one blinding difference between the two games however, and that is the quality of the graphics. While even the transition to 32-bit hardware couldn't save *Wing Commander III* from looking like a third-rate Mega Drive game, *Darklight's* polished PC origins are visibly evident in this well-rounded PlayStation adaptation.

In particular, the intelligent lighting effects are notably impressive. Witness the dramatic real-time lens flare as you're momentarily blinded after swinging past one of the two enormous suns dominating *Darklight's* alien solar system; or the subtle reflective and shadowing effects on enemy ships, as plasma cannons blast

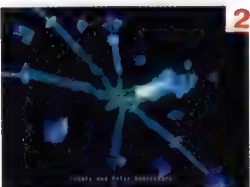
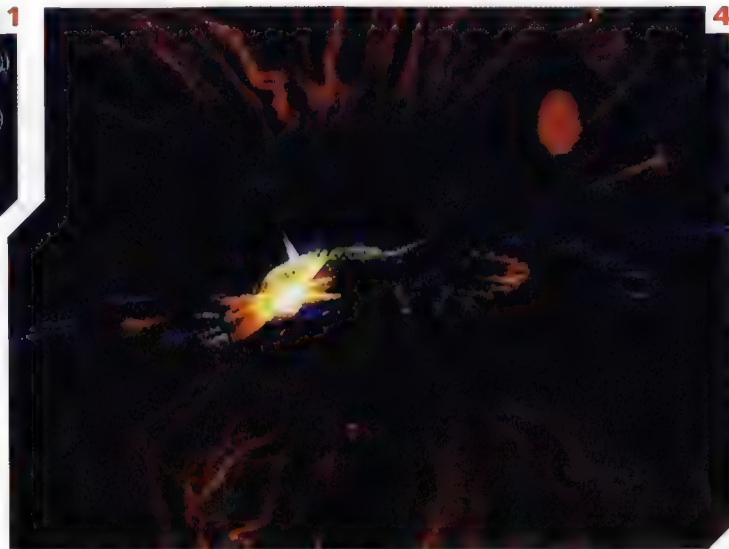


(1) Cut-scenes nicely cement together the action and mission-briefing sections. (2) Explosions look impressive as craft splinter into hundreds of polygon fragments. (3) Guidelines and icons make targets or mission objectives easily identifiable.



The Heads-Up Display (HUD), proves useful for both navigation and targeting purposes.





narrowly past a wing or an undercarriage. But that's as far as the realism goes. After all you're supposedly battling an alien race in a far-flung solar system dominated by two suns – hardly your everyday occurrence.

Woah, but we're screaming off the launch-pad a little prematurely here – time for some nonsensical plot-setting involving genetic

The craft are highly detailed ships which are lavishly textured and shaded

engineering and savage alien life forms. You play the part of 'Human', a name affectionately given to you by an alien race known as the Reptons who you have infiltrated after being genetically altered in a kind of futuristic student exchange programme. Your mission – or 50 missions, if you're braving the arcade mode – is to follow your orders and ultimately defeat the Repton's equally intelligent and technically advanced adversary, the Ovon.

Psycho-babble aside, you basically play Buck Rogers as you pilot a weapon-laden spacecraft through a seemingly infinite 3D cosmic environment, your sights firmly set on the enemy. There are other mission objectives such as drone retrieval, hostage rescue and reconnaissance, but alien obliteration is arguably the best and, without doubt, the most satisfying facet of *Darklight*.

With regard to craft dynamics, who can honestly say whether or not your spaceship handles

'realistically'. But it does feel responsive: it's extremely nippy off the mark – 0 to 60 in a second – and it can turn on a dime. The craft look well constructed too – solid, in fact. Gone are the wireframe mesh days of *Wing Commander's* basic polygon craft, replaced instead by highly detailed ships which are lavishly textured and shaded. But it's back to basics, as enemy craft reveal their simplistic beginnings when they explode in an impressive splintering of polygon fragments.

Overall, *Darklight* is shaping up to be a compact and uncomplicated combat sim which places great emphasis on atmosphere – rendered cut-scenes gel the plot together, while an ambient, Robert Miles-like soundtrack sets the dramatic scene. Look out for a full PlayTest in the very near future.



(1) Humans aren't your only adversaries. (2) The camera zooms in to capture *Perfect Weapon's* fighting action... (3) ...then pans out... (4) ...and out further as more enemies arrive.

(1) Hyperspace portal targeted. (2) Going through the hyperspace portal... (3) ...and coming out of it at the other end! (4) Flying through hyperspace, dodging the ion particles. (5) Enemy targeted and cannons firing. (6) That hyperspace run. Again.



Perfect Weapon

■ PUBLISHER:	EA
■ DEVELOPER:	Gray Matter
■ RELEASE DATE:	February
■ ORIGIN:	United States

Funnily enough *Perfect Weapon* isn't that different from *Time Commando*, an action adventure developed by French-based Adeline and published by EA. *Perfect Weapon* is a 3D action adventure which mixes exploration, puzzle-solving, and combat in one rendered melting pot, and sadly won't ►



All characters are made up of polygons, then textured and Gouraud-shaded.

PrePlay | EA line-up



Perfect Weapon has a wide variety of locations to visit and battle through, including labyrinthine crypts (1), rural villages (2), creepy forests (3), mountainous wastelands (4) and dungeons (5).

► win any awards for originality. You play the part of Blake Hunter, a champion in martial arts who has been mysteriously transported to an alien world, and the basic premise is to find out exactly where you are, why you are there and, most importantly, how to escape. There are five worlds to explore, each one constructed of individual screens linked together to create a sprawling 3D environment. If you can picture it, *Perfect Weapon* resembles Delphine's 16-bit classic *Another World* in terms of graphics and game structure. Over 1100 individual landscapes make up the alien

Perfect Weapon mixes exploration, puzzle-solving and combat... and little originality

environment, while all the characters are complex polygons elegantly texture-mapped and rounded-off with Gouraud shading. Combat moves are based on real martial art manoeuvres, and running at a rate of 30fps, they look unexpectedly smooth.

One magazine has actually described *Perfect Weapon* as 'Resident Evil meets Tekken 2', although we think they're way off on both



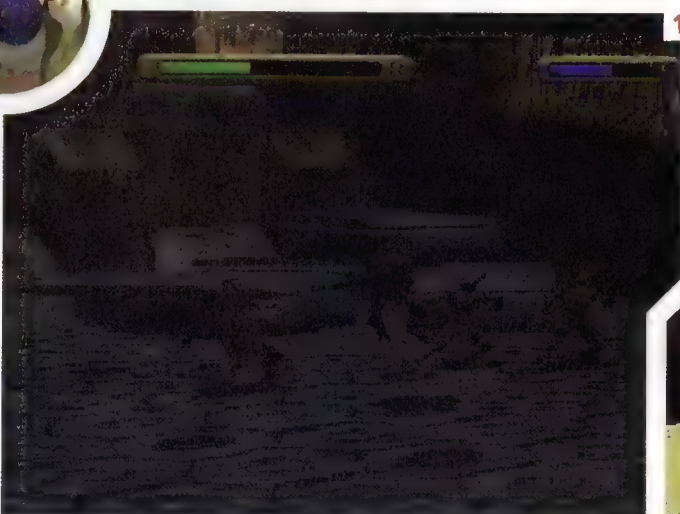
that opponents learn your attack patterns, should you opt for a repetitive approach.

Ten Pin Alley

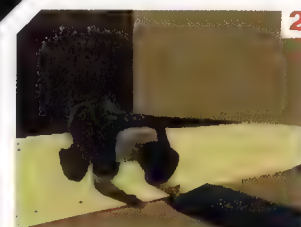
■ PUBLISHER: EA
■ DEVELOPER: Gray Matter
■ RELEASE DATE: February
■ ORIGIN: United States

We survived the wave of pinball hysteria, but could we be facing a surge of bowling games instead? If Gray Matter's

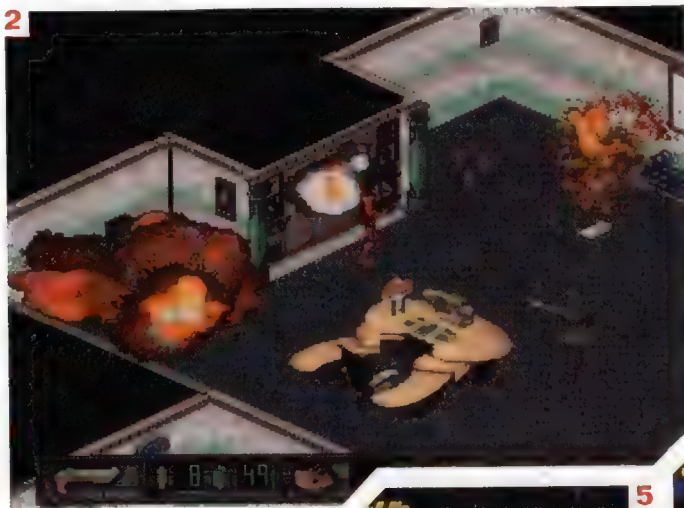
Ten Pin Alley endeavour is anything to go by, though, this might not be such a bad fate after all. Polished and well-rounded, the developers have thought beyond the basic principle of hurling a ball down a wood-planked runway toward a bunch of wooden skittles and have tried to capture something of the atmosphere of the game.



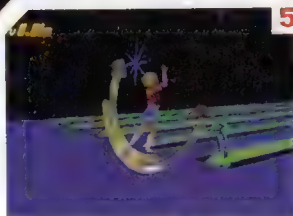
(1) Here's one thing that you can't do at a real bowling alley - follow your ball down the alley itself as it rockets toward the pins. (2) A player vents his frustration.



The characters featured in *Perfect Weapon* are numerous. They don't use motion capture technology but their moves are based on real martial arts manoeuvres to make the fight sequences as realistic as possible. Running at 30fps, all character animations are fluid and smooth.



(1) Stats. What simulation would be complete without them. (2) Nice to see you, to see you NICE! Good game, good game... (3) Opt for competitive six-player action in the much-welcomed Tournament Mode. (4) Using the game's fine-tuning options, line up your ball with pin-point accuracy for that one-in-a-million chance of the strike of your life! (5) To howl a ball the developers have opted for the golfing standard 'Swing-o-meter'. (6) Work it, girl.



At this point we wouldn't blame you for being a tad bit sceptical; bowling, like pinball, is definitely a 'hands-on' activity. However, Gray Matter are keen to stress the level of the physics implemented to ensure that the simulated bowlers, bowling balls, and pins react as realistically as possible, making *Ten Pin Alley* extremely playable, not to mention intuitive.

Plus there are innumerable options for you to tinker with, including character style and technical abilities, gutter set-up, lane conditions, and you can even embark on a tutorial for trick shots.

As for the graphical content, here too the developers have endeavoured to impress. Using polygons to construct the virtual bowling hall and the bowlers therein, *Ten Pin Alley* looks every bit a PlayStation title.

Crusader: No Remorse

■ PUBLISHER:	EA
■ DEVELOPER:	Origin
■ RELEASE DATE:	February
■ ORIGIN:	United States

On first impressions, *Crusader* smacks of another, slightly ageing EA game called *Space Hulk* which is based on the Games Workshop battle system of the same name and saw a release on most home-computer formats some years ago. Both games are visually similar, using cartoon-style graphics, leaving *Crusader* looking more akin to a Mega Drive or a SNES game than a 'typical' PlayStation title.

In actuality the basic game engine used for *Crusader* comes from an entirely different game

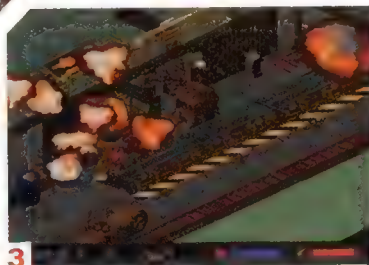
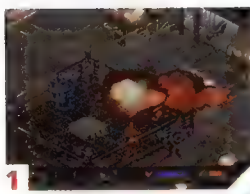
altogether – *Ultima VII*, an isometric RPG released on PC also developed by Origin. That's where the similarities end, however, *Crusader* having very little to do with role-playing. Unless, of course, you can consider being a resistance fighter battling for freedom against an evil mega-corporation armed with 16 gargantuan guns 'role-playing'. We'd prefer to call it a good old-fashioned shoot 'em up.

In terms of gameplay, *Crusader* is a bit of a *Loaded*. Adopting an isometric perspective, you get a good overview of the room-based levels while having the added advantage of being able to see over walls and large obstacles littering the individual rooms. There are numerous hazards to overcome, such as exploding barrels, wall-mounted guns, nuclear-powered terminals (so a careless, stray bullet could be extremely fatal) – but the main health hazards are the heavily armed troops guarding almost every room.

The controls are fairly responsive but movement is limited in a *Loaded/Smash TV* kind of way, with only eight directions available, but you can zip along at quite a pace to escape enemy fire. And you can always duck behind crates and walls if the barrage becomes too intense, or take advantage of the energy replenishing terminals should your situation get really desperate. Which is more than likely.



Crusader may look a little dated in terms of its graphics, but the sharp action may just keep this shoot 'em up from prematurely pushing up daisies.



(1) *Crusader* looks more like a 'wait-your-turn' strategy game than a frantic shooter, but we can assure you that it's definitely a free-for-all. (2) There's danger at every turn with exploding barrels, wall-mounted cannons, laser trip wires, and guards aplenty. (3) In case of fire, please move quickly to the nearest exit. Do not use the elevator. Do not panic.



PrePlay | Mech Warrior



Fast-forward to a time when two-legged robot warriors bestride the earth, throwing their weight about like they're *Star Wars* characters.

Do it courtesy of Activision and a PlayStation

When Activision first displayed their post-apocalyptic vision of duelling robots, we couldn't have been more underwhelmed. But the other day a CD was speedily transferred from briefcase to PlayStation, and our feelings were just as quickly transposed. Like a Rolf Harris painting, what started as a vague mess of colour is now starting to take shape. And were the whiskered antipodean to utter his mid-painting catchphrase, 'Can you see what it is yet?', we would nod and think, 'Yes... this has the potential to be a quite acceptable combat sim with hints of strategy and adventure'.

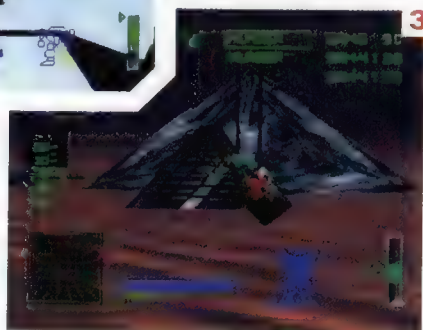
Mech Warrior has a real history to accompany its fictional narrative: *Battletech*, a table-top strategy wargame, was huge in the States. Activision first



(1) Rather like a low-level flight sim you sight things in your crosshair and blast away.
(2) Up close and impersonal.
(3) The ubiquitous icy level.



(1) The Mechs are very easy to control and fairly intuitive fighting machines.
(2) *Star Wars*, anyone? **(3)** One of many strange landscapes.



attempted to bring it to Britain in videogame format back in 1994, with the SNES *MechWarrior*. A far superior PC version came soon after, followed by a SNES sequel, *MechWarrior 3050*, earlier this year. The PlayStation version is far closer to the PC version, with the action large and polygon-lead as opposed to the fiddly sprite-based SNES incarnations.

For those who lack the above historical knowledge first-hand, the game involves controlling a two-legged Mech Warrior blasting away other Mechs and enemy craft in the pursuit of strategic battle aims. It's rather like controlling a low-flying aircraft in a flight warfare sim, as you try to get the enemy into range and blast them away. In terms of

PlayStation, *Krazy Ivan* is about the closest comparison.

Good news on the technical front is that the frame rate is high, in pursuit of real-time action, and even better, a link-up mode allows you to compete against a friend. In terms of missions, the Instant Action Mode will feature 10 different planets and 12 different Mechs, while in Allegiance Mode, players will be able to enter a Mech Lab and customise their Mech.

As for gameplay, we wouldn't want to jump to any conclusions before a rigorous PlayTest. For now, luxuriate in some colourful screen-shots that Rolf would be proud of and we'll report on a true masterpiece in a forthcoming issue.



■ PUBLISHER:	Activision	■ RELEASE DATE:	March '97	■ PLAYERS:	One or two
■ DEVELOPER:	Quantum Factory	■ ORIGIN:	United States	■ STYLE:	Shoot 'em up

actua

SOCCER

ACTUA SOCCER vs FIFA'97

1 YEAR ON...

AND THEY'RE STILL GETTING THRASHED

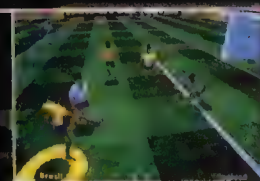
PlayStation Power

"Last year, FIFA'96 took a critical mauling at the hands of Actua Soccer...while FIFA'97 is undoubtedly better than last year's effort, Actua still pips it at the post as a better all round game"



Mean Machines PlayStation

"If you want comparisons, think of Actua Soccer as Premier League champions Manchester United and FIFA'97 as the Diadora's languishers Stafford Rangers"



PlayStation Pro

"Is FIFA'97 better than Actua? Get outta town!"



PlayStation Plus

"Actua Soccer is better than FIFA'97. In fact it makes FIFA look like the wheezy kid who was always picked last at school"



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PrePlay | Total Drivin'

driving forces

Veteran developers Merit Studios are about to release their first PlayStation title. Could this be the game to put *Sega Rally* on the skids?



[1] Ski-lodges, mountain passes and avalanches await careless drivers on the Alps. **[2]** The Island features a snaking dirt road surrounded by an ocean you can actually drive into. **[3]** Just like *Sega Rally* on Saturn, you can do outrageous jumps.



Merit Studios, whose previous efforts have been largely confined to the 16-bit consoles, are about to debut on the PlayStation with *Total Drivin'*. The title, which is presently only 60 per cent complete, should give driving fans the kind of race they've been waiting for since *Sega Rally* turned heads on the Saturn some 12 months ago.

The PlayStation has had its fair share of road-racing games and by way of contrast, *Total Drivin'* fits rather neatly into the burgeoning off-road and rally genre that includes Gremlin's *Hardcore 4x4* and the lacklustre *Burning Road*. The game features three race classes – Dakar Rally, Sports and Rally class – and six different terrains to master. Not all cars are suitable for all tracks. Dakar Rally Class gives you the opportunity to drive 4x4 vehicles, which are strong contenders on

the desert races, but ham-strung on the urban Hong Kong track. Sports Class, which features the familiar super-cars of Porsche and Lamborghini, is ideal for city racing, where cornering and speed are the order of the day. Rally Class, best used on the Highland and Alpine terrains provide a happy medium, with powerful acceleration and glue-like handling. An eclectic mix, then, that should provide for a varied racing experience.

Technical emphasis

The game is being coded by veteran programmer Andrew Richards, who created the superb *Sampras Extreme Tennis* on the Mega Drive. While not the greatest introduction to 3D driving games, it bodes well for a title that will rely more heavily on gameplay than overblown graphics. That's not to say that *Total Drivin'* will lack anything in

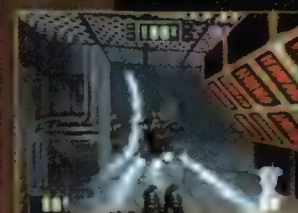
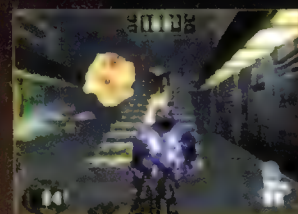
the visual department. Merit have eschewed the traditional driving-engine (where only the road is available for racing) in favour of a true 3D environment. All the tracks are entirely constructed of polygons and no distinction is made between the track and the surrounding landscape, allowing you to make your own shortcuts.

Driving games traditionally stand or fall by the handling of the individual vehicles, and variety is what makes a game like *Ridge Racer* great. *Total* is certainly heading in the right direction by giving the player access to so many different cars and tracks. How well those cars will handle depends on if Merit can master the true physics, making power-sliding and jumping an integral part of the game. If so, this could be another great addition to the Sony racing ranks.



[1] The ultimate rally level. Dash across dodgy-looking bridges into the misty Highlands. **[2]** The surrounding scenery is incredibly life-like. **[3]** Speed through Red Square and past the Kremlin, round tank-sized streets.

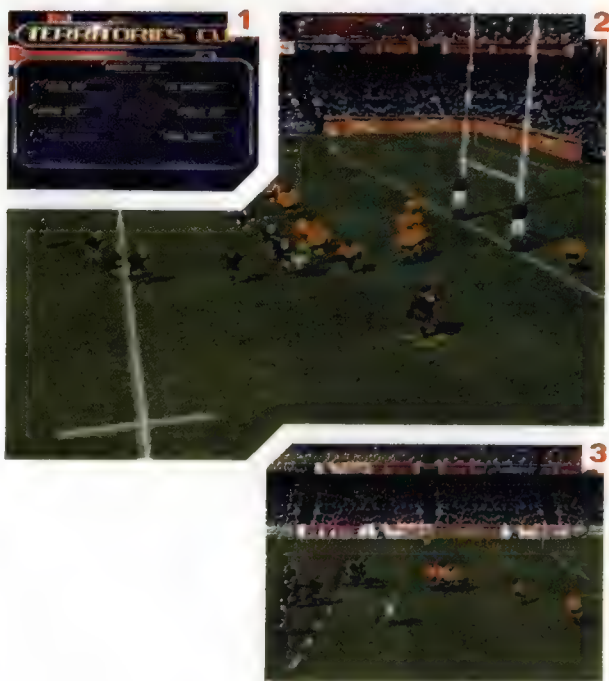
■ PUBLISHER:	Merit Studios	■ RELEASE DATE:	TBA	■ PLAYERS:	One to four
■ DEVELOPER:	In-house	■ ORIGIN:	UK	■ STYLE:	Racing



PrePlay | Jonah Lomu Rugby



One day, during a soccer match at Rugby school,
a naughty young fellow named William Webb Ellis
gathered the ball in his hands and hurtled for the goal.
And, by jiggins, rugby was born...



(1) Select from one of six competitions, including our famed Home Nations tournament. (2) Jonah Lomu is a lot bigger than the other players within the game. But then he is in real life as well. (3) Australia vs New Zealand is the ultimate battle in the world of rugby union.

Big chap, is Jonah. Anyone fortunate enough to see him swat the boy Underwood aside in the Rugby World Cup semi-final in South Africa would be able to confirm that Jonah is indeed a 'big chap'. Born in 1975, you know. Doesn't seem right, does it, that someone born in 1975 should be 6'4" and 19 stone AND run 100m over grass in under 11 seconds? Like we say, A Big Chap.

A day in Birmingham and the opportunity to take a close look at the licensed *Jonah Lomu Rugby*, a co-production between Rage Software (*Striker '96* was one of theirs) and kings of mini-vehicle mayhem, Codemasters. What joys the festive season throws upon us.

Neglected subject

Rugger has never figured highly as a subject for computerised simulation. Audiogenic produced a couple of likeable attempts for the Amiga and there was a decent one for the Mega Drive but apart from that... So why did Rage decide to pile in with this assault on the oval ball game? Trevor Williams, Rage honcho explains. 'I'm a big rugby fan and I don't think

anyone's really done the game justice. After we finished *Striker '96* we could see the potential in the engine that a sprite-based rugby simulation could both look good and run at the right pace. Using polygons would slow the game too much.'

Some might say that eschewing polygons for less fashionable, sprite-based players is a bold (backward?) step. Yet even though the players look rather less sculptured than, say, their *Actua Soccer* counterparts they're handsome enough, and the 30 players (and a ref) can be on screen at one time and still move fluidly with no slow-down. Rage acquired the services of a semi-pro rugby player to provide the moves for the motion capture and spent considerable time and effort ensuring that the running motion is realistic. The fellow was



(1) All the players line up ready to try and block the conversion attempt. (2) This is the part where big men put their heads in each others' backsides and reach between others' legs. Nice.

■ PUBLISHER:	Codemasters	■ ORIGIN:	UK
■ DEVELOPER:	Rage Software	■ STYLE:	Rugby sim
■ RELEASE DATE:	March '97	■ PLAYERS:	One to four

Jonah Lomu biography



Jonah Tali Lomu. Who he? A New Zealand-born Tongan who just happens to be the most powerful rugby flanker in living memory. He's the best part of two metres tall, he weighs in at 19 stone and he can run like the wind. He's the sort of chap who breaks records with alarming regularity: youngest player ever to represent the All Blacks at 19 years and 45 days, youngest player in test history to score 10 tries. He's even starred in a pizza advertisement with the Underwood brothers. Jonah is renowned as the most difficult player to tackle in world rugby – he doesn't bother to run around opponents, he runs straight through them, crushing them underfoot. A frightening sight.



(1-3) The intro screen includes scary-looking men making faces at each other. And they say football is a funny old game. (4) Only a minute in and already the Kiwis are pressing for a try. (5) Choose from a number of grounds. (6) A Jonah Lomu try, what a surprise!

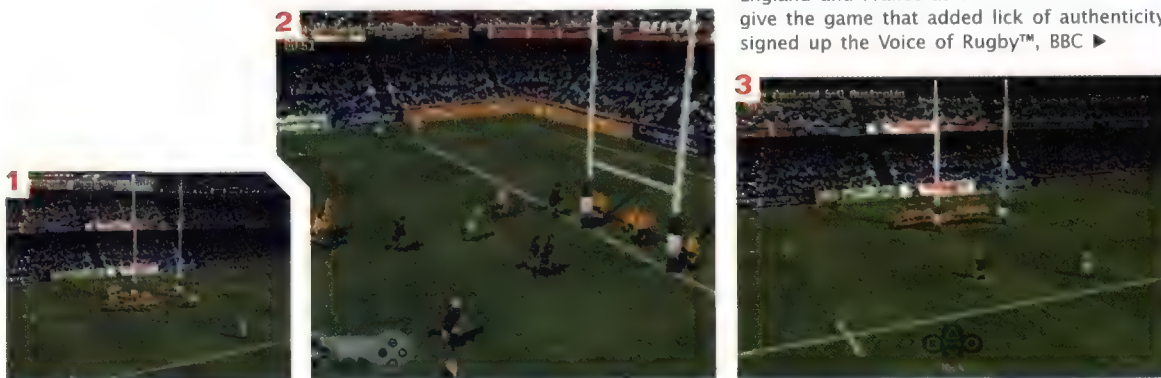
apparently sweating buckets on a treadmill – pity the poor guy who was on the receiving end of the tackles. So who was the unlucky recipient of the hefty challenge? Why **Tony McCabe**, the AI (Artificial Intelligence) programmer, of course.

Authentic moves

Tony is responsible for ensuring that the engine is smooth and that the little sprites play rugby like proper rugby players. Rugby union is not an easy sport to accurately simulate. Rucks, mauls and scrums, in particular, are difficult to precisely replicate – the AI for the scrum has been re-written some six times and Rage are determined to ensure that it's just so. 'I've been working on the game for about twelve months now',

explains Tony. 'One of the hardest things has been making sure the ball movement is correct. Because a rugby ball never bounces the same way twice, we've had to work out as many different ways as possible that it might move and we think we've done a good job.' Rugby games in the past have struggled to simulate many of the essential elements of the sport, but in *Jonah Lomu* you control how and when your players enter rucks and mauls – the aggressive aspects of the game. Also the scrums and the lineouts are ordered and skilful. Whereas previously the outcome of scrums was determined by a session of frantic joystick-waggling, in *Lomu* it's all about timing.

Rage have purchased the audio rights to last season's Five Nations match between England and France at Twickenham and to give the game that added lick of authenticity, signed up the Voice of Rugby™, BBC ▶



(1) Rugby is an incredibly difficult sport to replicate with some of the complex plays and mass-player involvement. (2) But as you can see from even these screenshots, Rage have done a fine job. (3) A chance to extend the lead.

DISRUPTOR

"Disruptor... is a challenging, atmospheric and at times, bloody terrifying experience." 8/10

Official Playstation

"It's just too much. Doom I could handle. Even Alien Trilogy came and went without too much trouble. But Disruptor has too many levels to explore, too many aliens to fight. I don't think I can last much longer!"

Playstation Plus

"Imagine my delight when Disruptor arrives looking completely cool, sounding smart, and playing like a god-damned action fest!"

"A right old corker"

Mean Machines Playstation

"...the best I've seen yet." 91%

Total Playstation

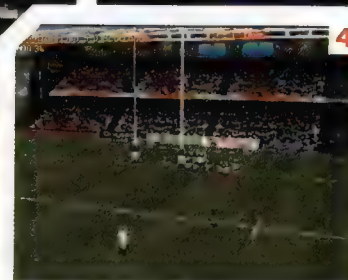
Interplay



(1) At this point Bill McClaren starts to get very excitable. **(2)** 100 per cent success rate from the South African kicker. **(3)** You can play one of a number of classic match scenarios. **(4)** It looks simple but these things can be easily missed.

► commentator and professional Scotsman Bill ('AND THEY'RE ON THE 22') McClaren. And to redress the balance, pundit Bill Beaumont has been drafted in.

Rather than opt for the burgeoning club scene, *Lomu* has



when your players enter and the scrums are still full

30 national teams from around the globe. All the 'real' players are in here (go on then, who plays at scrum half for Thailand? Eh? EH?) and Tony reckons the players are judged on some 20 different attributes, as well as being the correct height and weight. Tony, again: 'The idea is

that you can play to the relative strengths of the teams involved. For instance, Argentina are not the best side in the world but they're renowned for having a really strong pack and you organise your tactics to suit'. Predictably, *Jonah Lomu* stands out somewhat. He's huge and once you get him tanking down the pitch he takes some stopping – which in itself is realistic.

All the other requisite elements of a sporting sim are included; the Five Nations and World Cup can be contested using a variety of camera angles and you may even wish to play in driving rain. There are four stadiums in which to do battle, though Rage shied away from exactly reproducing grounds. *Jonah Lomu* is set for release in March.



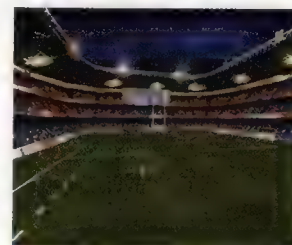
A solid grounding



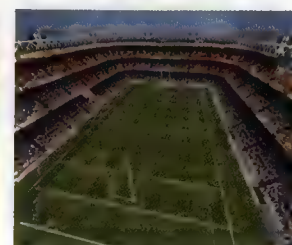
Here are some of the wire frames which were used by Rage in the creation of *Jonah Lomu Rugby*.



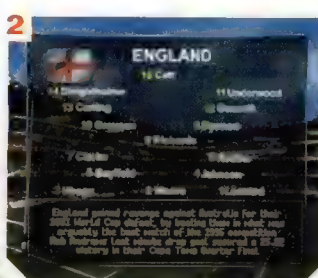
Because of the shape of a rugby ball it rarely bounces the same way twice. Which makes designing tricky.



There's a choice of four stadiums, though Rage have avoided making exact replications of real grounds.



There are also plenty of different camera angles at your disposal from which the action can be viewed.



(1) It may be Wales against England, but that is not Twickenham or the Arms Park. **(2)** There have been a few changes since this England team played together. **(3)** Who ate all the pies? England, by the looks of it. **(4)** This time we're off to McCabe Park. **(5)** Ireland take on France.

Tennis

Between Two People

Is A

Beautiful

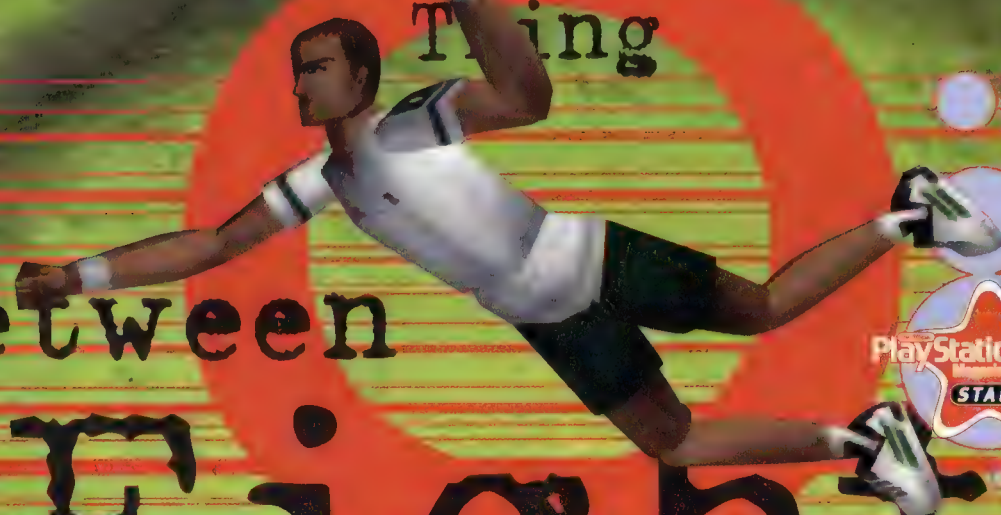
Thing

Between

Eight

It's

Incredible.



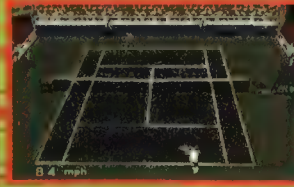
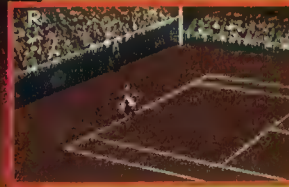
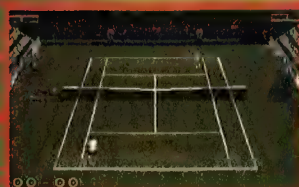
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PrePlay | Blood Omen: Legacy Of Kain

the Bloodsucker proxy

Courting controversy with their distinctly adult horror escapade, Crystal Dynamics clearly believe in giving a sucker an even break...

Well, at least you don't have to rescue any poxy princesses. It may be an action/role-play/adventure type of beast but *Blood Omen*, from the team that brought *Pandemonium*, is far from conventional.

Ambushed and slain by brigands in a rural backwater, an arrogant young aristocrat awakes to find himself in Hell, condemned to an eternity of pain for his sins. But a chance reprieve presents itself in an offer from the necromancer Mortanius, who

Kain cares not for the plight of the living. To put it mildly, you're a 24-carat git

grants him the opportunity to avenge himself by returning to the mortal plane in undead form. As the full implications of his unholy rebirth dawn on him, the eponymous Kain discovers that Mortanius intends to use him as a pawn in a much bigger game...

The unusual and rather neat



(1) Animated skeletons flee before Kain's blade, handily illuminating his path. **(2)** Kain indulges in the vampiric equivalent of raiding the fridge. **(3)** An eldritch unholy altar. Which, coincidentally, doubles as a save point.

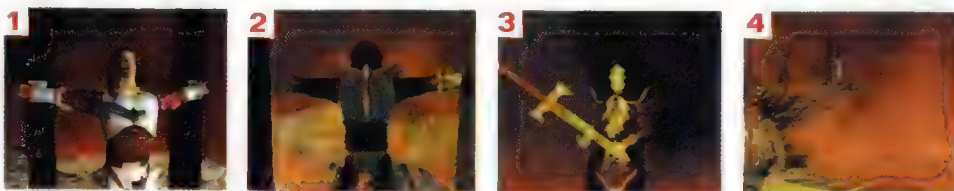
twist here is that you take on the role of a villain, an anti-hero, a vampire who feeds on the hot, fresh blood of the living to survive. Sounds like an interesting moral dilemma, but no – your character wholeheartedly enjoys it. Hacking at his foes until the blood flies, Kain can't help

laughing occasionally. Even when confronted with the doom that threatens the world, Kain admits to pursuing his quest for purely selfish reasons and cares little for the plight of the living. To put it mildly, you're a 24-carat git.

Traditional formula

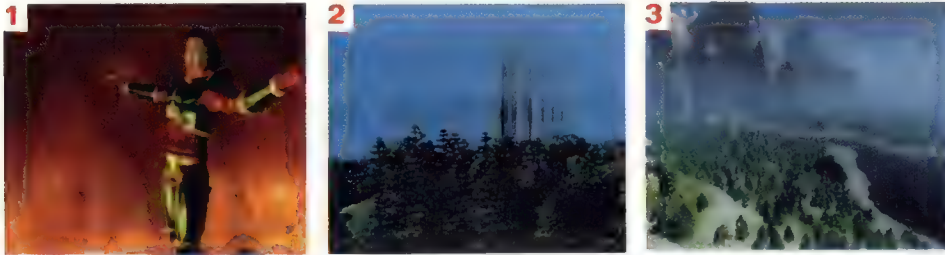
In playing style, at least, *Blood Omen* still follows an established formula. Underneath the grand effects and challenging narrative is a straightforward overhead hack-and-slay adventure that leads you on an exploration of towns and dungeons, defeating bosses and discovering new powers. As you progress you'll develop the ability to transform into a bat, a wolf, or a cloud of vapour – the traditional vampiric guises – which can help solve

Born again in Hell



(1) 'What have I done to deserve this? Apart from killing a few people.' **(2)** '... and I've got an itchy thigh.' **(3)** 'Allow me, Kain. Would you like to leave this place?' **(4)** 'Umm...'

■ PUBLISHER:	Activision	■ ORIGIN:	United States
■ DEVELOPER:	Crystal Dynamics	■ STYLE:	Action RPG
■ RELEASE DATE:	March '97	■ PLAYERS:	One



(1) As *Pandemonium* demonstrated, Crystal Dynamics own a rather spiffing CG animation system. It's used to depict game locations **(2)** or events like your flight as a bat **(3)**.

puzzles and open up new areas of the world map. When all else fails, you have your trusty sword and a selection of skin-flaying magicks to carve a path to safety.

Blood Omen also makes a perverse twist of typical goody-goody adventures with dark incentives to commit evil. When you first come across a sobbing wench chained to the walls of a crypt, you might indeed wonder how to rescue her. But this is your crypt, and she's there for your sustenance. With a flick of a button, Kain grabs his helpless victim by the throat and watches her blood spurt through the air into his thirsting lips. And as you notice your sanguine energy bar

fill a little in reward, you realise that this is going to be no ordinary videogame storyline.

Crosses to bear

Did we mention the downside to being a vampire? Mobs of fearful peasants will try to lynch you. Running water burns you as corrosively as acid. And you're at the mercy of the sun, with a changing real-time environment that imitates the passage of day and night. You can venture out in daylight, at penalty, but stronger foes are best confronted when darkness grants you strength. If you're wounded, a visit to a village at night will reveal innocent peasants sleeping in

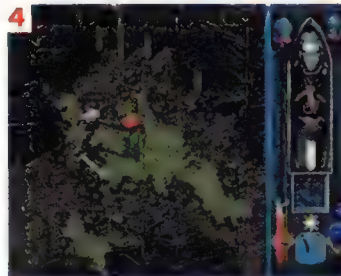
their beds – plentiful sources of vampire nutrition. You have to be frugal in your feasting, however, as the restless spirits of your victims will attack you if you return to their place of dispatch.

Reassuringly, *Blood Omen* takes full advantage of the CD format. Besides its moody orchestral music and hours of spoken dialogue, a full 25 minutes of computer-animated FMV cut-scenes embellish the plot. The game world seems enormous – over 100,000 screens – and the developers claim it will take at least 100 hours to solve the entire adventure.

Has *Resident Evil's* subject matter set a precedent? On the one hand, it's reassuring to see console publishers acknowledge the vast numbers of adult owners with a title of such 'mature' content. On the other, you can't help wondering if Activision hope to stir up a little controversy on the premise that no publicity is bad publicity. We suggest that intelligent British gamers should at least have the chance to judge *Blood Omen's* amoral scenario for themselves, and we're pleased to reveal that a UK version is being developed right now. Good Christians, bar your doors and hang the garlic.



(1) A welcome touch of humour manifests itself in your vampire 'score card'. **(2)** 'And which weapon will Sir be using today? The no 7 Widowmaker?'



(1) Though now a ghost, your previous victim can still be drained of magical energy. **(2)** Ariel explains the story (yawn) of the Pillars of Nosgoth... **(3)** 'Curses. I must fix that alarm clock.' **(4)** A forest bandit makes a handy picnic. **(5)** Strip foes of their flesh with 'Flay'.

PrePlay | Tenka



Many have tried, and failed, to capture the brilliance of *Doom*. Psygnosis reckon they have what it takes to lift the genre to the next level

In 2096, presumably about 12 months before you decide to take up racing and become a *Wipeout* driver, you find yourself in an off-world colony. These colonies have been created in answer to the problem of an Earth which has basically gone so bad and war-torn as to be uninhabitable. Unfortunately the colony that you, Tenka, find yourself on is one dedicated to arsing around with people's genetics and turning them into deadly Bionoid warriors – half-human, half-machine.

Doom face-lift

This, understandably, is not to your liking, so you tool yourself up with a gun and set about legging it around the colony in a bid to single handedly destroy the Bionoids and ruin the plans of the people upstairs.

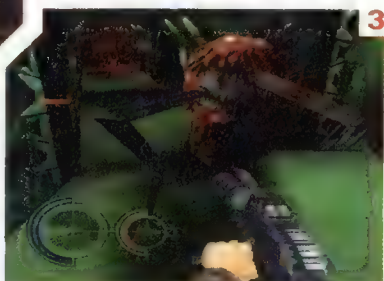
Tenka is an attempt to take the *Doom* formula and give it a long overdue face-lift and tune-up. After all, the original *Doom* format has been kicking around



[1] Like *Wipeout*, the future is bleak and lit exclusively by neon to create an intense atmosphere. [2] And also like *Wipeout* the graphics are excellent. [3] See what we mean?



[1] So could this be a *Doom*-beater? [2] It certainly has the graphical better of its seminal competitor. [3] And from what we've seen so far the gameplay isn't too shabby either.

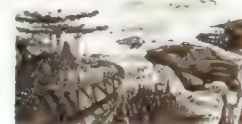


for years, now, so it's about time someone tried to take it to the next stage. You'll have to wait for the review to see if Psygnosis' efforts have paid off, but in the meantime, we'll outline the areas they've tried to improve upon. First there are the graphics. As with most Psygnosis games, a lot of time has been spent on the visuals. The enemies in the game have been created using polygons and texture-mapping. *Doom* featured sprite-based enemies and, as we all know, this meant that close up the bad guys turned into a mess of huge pixels. Not so with *Tenka*.

Gameplay has also been given the once, or even twice over. *Doom*'s flat, angular structure was okay at the time, but now Psygnosis have given gamers a

world which exists on many levels with much of the scenery being made up of curved walls and ceilings. Coupled with this, you can also look and fire up and down. It creates a much more convincing environment. It also means you have to target enemies much more accurately.

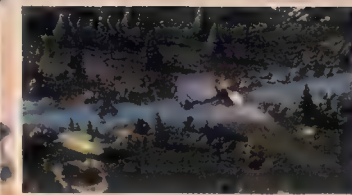
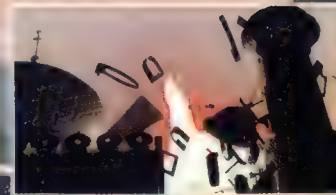
In closing it's worth mentioning that even after all this time, *Doom* remains a great game. Its elusively brilliant recipe has been emulated by many a pretender but rarely has it been accurately captured. On paper *Tenka* does seem to enter the battle with considerable advantages, but it would be a foolish person who prematurely proclaims it a *Doom*-beater. We'll decide on that in next month's PSM.



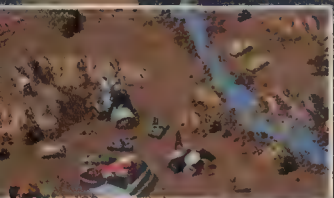
There is certainly greater depth to *Tenka*'s look than *Doom*. It's much fuller.



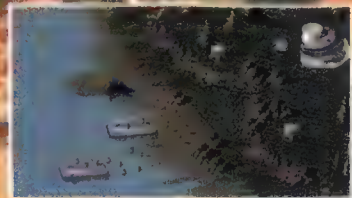
■ PUBLISHER:	Psygnosis	■ RELEASE DATE:	March '97	■ PLAYERS:	One
■ DEVELOPER:	In-house	■ ORIGIN:	United Kingdom	■ STYLE:	3D shoot 'em up



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PrePlay | Virtual Pool

Eight Ball Ace

From French gentry to American men called Fats, propelling balls over a table using a stick has proved an enduring pastime. And this is where we're at...

All right, to be frank, given the choice most of us would sooner play real pool in a tavern or youth club than sit in front of a computer and bash buttons to pot a virtual ball. And you couldn't say that about a computerised interpretation of wrestling, either. But pool? On a console? And how much are they expecting to charge us for the pleasure of clacking a few balls without so much as a polygonal plume of smoke drifting lazily across the light?

Those relatively new to computer games (and we know many of you are 'on' your first console) may be surprised to

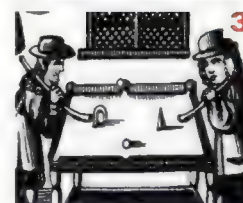
learn that in the past, simulations of those monolithic signs of misspent youth, snooker and pool have proved incredibly popular. One chap, who answers to the decidedly unusual moniker of Archer McClean, made both his name and fortune by almost single-handedly flooding Amiga and PC-land with his splendid readings of the baize sorts.

Definitive game

Indeed *Virtual Pool* is now regarded by many as the definitive PC pool game, even now, 18 months on from its release. American coders Celeris, producers of the original, are currently sculpting the finishing touches to the PlayStation



[1] The Tutorial mode sees a major-league pool shark revealing all his secrets, in glorious FMV. **[2, 3]** Where did pool originate, and when? Find out in the Encyclopedia.

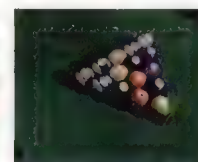
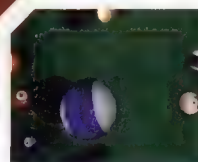
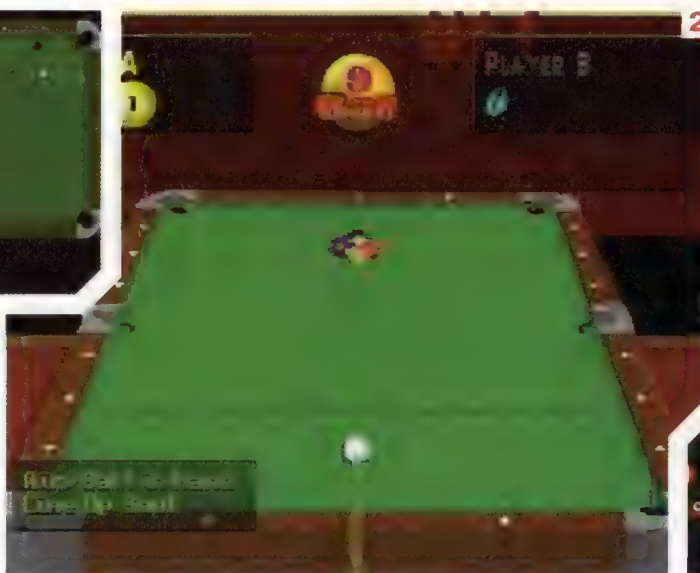


incarnation, although essentially it's an identical clone of the former. There's a wealth of camera views and precise cueing options as well as three versions of pool to pot. Straight pool is where you score points for each ball you pot, 8-Ball is the game we're all familiar with and 9-Ball is where the balls are racked in a diamond and have to pot the balls in numerical order.

Also included is a sprawling, animated history of billiards which is, somewhat surprisingly, almost Python-esque in content and a huge selection of flashy trick shots displayed using FMV. At first glance it doesn't look that special, in these visually-resplendent graphic times, but it will no doubt play exactly the same as the rather fine original.

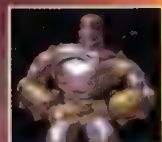
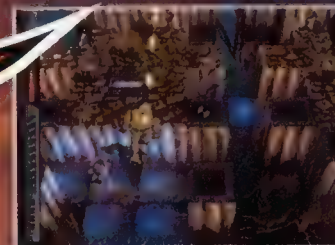
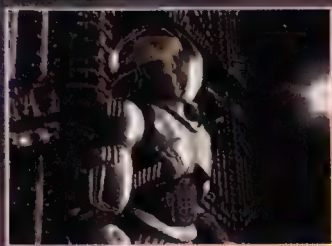


[1] Not all of us are pool sharks, so if you're really crap with your angles you'll be relieved to know that the game engine works them out for you. Phew! **[2]** Imagine your chin resting on the cue as the camera swoops down to the player's-eye view.



■ PUBLISHER: Interplay ■ RELEASE DATE: March ■ PLAYERS: Two
 ■ DEVELOPER: Celeris ■ ORIGIN: United States ■ STYLE: Pool sim

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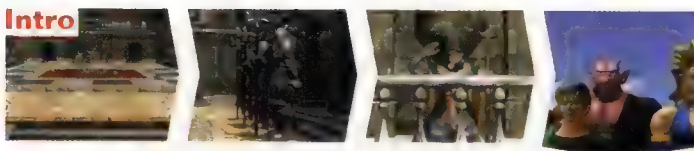
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gripping

From the **mysterious East** comes a **beat 'em up** that's also a **role-playing game**. **Confucious?** We'd say so

Intro



The introduction would seem to suggest that everyone has assembled for some kind of tournament. Presumably they each have their own reasons for being there. The toad-like geezer in the third picture is also the final boss, although we've yet to see him in action.

If all the PlayStation fighting games were to join forces, the world would be in serious trouble. Nothing could withstand the hundreds of characters made out of little polygons as they marched on the Houses of Parliament, The White House and The Kremlin. More disturbingly for our military leaders, there seems to be no sign of a slow-down; no halt to production. One day soon, the entire world could be overrun by



King and his mates.

Of course, this state of affairs poses problems to the games themselves, as well as to world order. How on earth do you stand out from the crowd? How do you become one of the generals of the assault, leading from the front, rather than more cannon-

fodder for game reviewers to mercilessly mow down with their Mk 37a Kalashnikov keyboards?

Selling point

If you're *Tekken* (1 or 2), you do it by being supremely wonderful. You offer more moves, more feeling, more class than any of your opponents. For all the others, though – those that follow on afterwards – there has to be something more. A



(1) Ooh, you don't want to cross big Marie. (2) No sliding around on the ice level, thank goodness. (3) Pretty good shadows they're casting, eh? (4) You wouldn't want to be the person responsible for pulling Oliems' tail off – he looks pretty mad about it.



■ PUBLISHER:	SCEE	■ ORIGIN:	Japan
■ DEVELOPER:	Squaresoft	■ STYLE:	Beat 'em up
■ RELEASE DATE:	January '97	■ PLAYERS:	One or two



[1] 'What time do you call this?' [2] A hold. Once you've grasped your opponent like this, the combat moves into a different mode. [3] Saturday night fever. [4] The throws are very impressive. [5] Yes! [6] He feels foolish now.

The really new thing about *Tobal No.1* is the 'quest' mode which lets you take one of the characters on an underground quest

gimmick. A selling point. A hook.

For the rather smart-looking *Tobal No.1*, this hook is a double-edged weapon. Firstly, *Tobal* has a whole range of grappling moves, which all the characters are very good at. Once fighters are into a grapple, they have to do something to break out of it. This can be as simple as throwing your opponent, or can involve marching them, Sumo-wrestling style, to the edge of

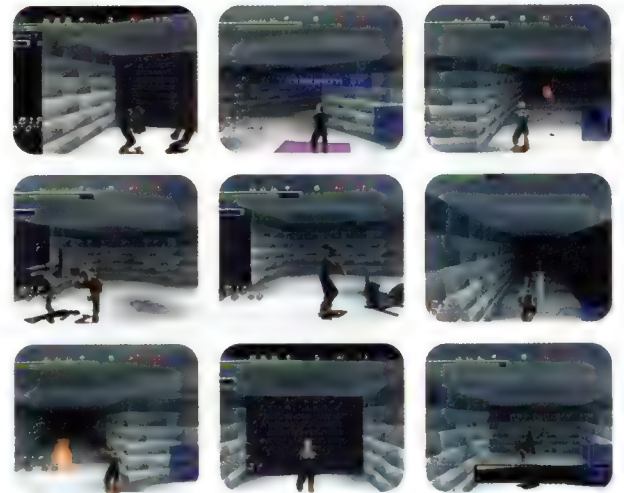


the arena. Rather like *Virtua Fighter*, anybody who falls out of the ring loses the bout. But the really new thing about *Tobal No.1* is the 'quest' mode. In addition to the normal, vs mode, tournament mode and practice mode, *Tobal No.1* lets you take one of the characters on an underground quest. This involves wandering around mazes, fighting the creatures you come across, collecting crystals and buying power-ups with them, and avoiding traps. There's a very neatly designed practice level that gets you used to all the controls, and then you're off on a pretty spiffing adventure.

Tobal No.1 looks like it could be a game that will hold its head high in the overcrowded world of the beat 'em up. Look out for a review next month.



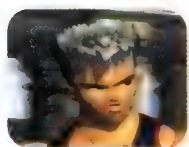
Corridors of power



The quest option takes you deep underground where you encounter various monsters, power-ups, traps and puzzles. This is a cracking idea, as you can practise your favourite character while having fun at the same time.

Creature feature

It's so obligatory that we're really rather loathe to do it, but here's a quick run-down on all the characters. The quotes are from the unintentionally hilarious translation of the Japanese manual:



Chuji-Wu
'Natural talent when it comes to anything related to using his physical body.' The all-rounder. Quick, athletic and strong.



Epon
'She is not up to the idea of taking on a boyfriend who is stronger than she is.' The looker. Quick but not all that strong.



Oliems
'His favourite food is fried Earthworms.' The alien. Big, strong and fast but with a short reach, Oliems' stumpy tail is useless.



Hom
'People tend to think of him as being very serious. But in reality he can be a blast.' The robot. Has some very weird attacks.



Fei-Psu
'What he did with the Mormoran he won is still a mystery.' The oldie. Not very fast or powerful, but is technically excellent.



Ill-Goga
'Surprisingly, his hobby is reading Shakespeare.' The other alien. Slow but strong, he'll slap you with his long tail.



Marie-Ivonskaya
'She is a highly sentimental Russian-French.' The BIG woman. Fairly fast and robust, she can match anyone for strength.



Gren Kuts
'Being from Britain, he is obviously an Earthling.' The boy. Average power and speed are enlivened by Gren's quick strike.

PrePlay | Cool Boarders



Get ready, dude, to perch atop board and hurtle down icy slopes – in the requisite baggy garb, of course. It's snowboarding...

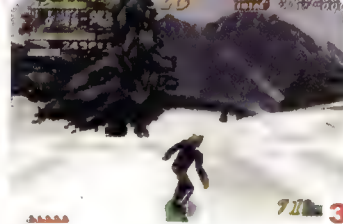
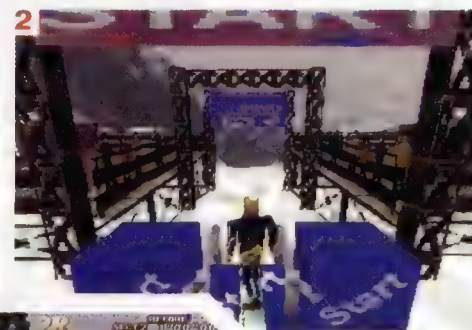


Someone's been watching a Jamiroquai video. Was it 'Emergency On Planet Earth'? No matter, enter a world where the clothes are ridiculously expensive, if pleasantly baggy of cut. The intro is, well, similar to a Jamiroquai room.

Snowboard racing is a relatively new addition to winter sports. It's as it sounds – you stand on a board and whoop and holler down snowy hills, wearing, if at all possible, fashionably baggy clothing. You may wish to listen to radical choons on the piste, too.

Cool Boarders is the first snowboarding sim to appear on the PlayStation, although fans of 'extreme sports' are catered for in the rollerskating, mountain biking, luge and skateboarding *ESPN Extreme Games*. The more beady-eyed among you will have noted the playable demo of its sequel, *2Extreme*, which happened by last month.

Anyway. We're here to chat



(1) Of course, the fine thing about alpine sports games is the scenery. (2) On the blocks. Tap the X-button to pick up speed. (3) It's almost like skateboarding, only without wheels.



(1) Wicked sound system, huh? There's a whole host of techno tunes to select from, and a fine control room. (2) Orange body-warmers are back in fashion. Get with it.

amiably about snowboarding. Essentially, the style of game is similar to any racer: you control the direction of the board as it speeds in a southerly direction. En route, you occasionally have to defy the laws of gravity and those of a collected disposition can perform some super tricks – grab the board with both hands, spin 360 degrees.

Boarding speak

Sony have kindly provided us with a manual but terms therein such as 'fakie', 'goofy' and 'stale fish' have left us somewhat bewildered. In the interests of board science, we spoke to snowboard expert Cam Winstanley, editor of Future Publishing's *Board Stupid*

magazine. He had this to say: 'Well "goofy" is when you ride the board with your right foot forward, "regular" is when you ride with the left foot forward and "fakie" is when you ride the opposite way to what you normally do. "Stale fish" means nothing to me. Although it probably smells.'

Many thanks. When you up and boot, you get to choose from six boards: two freestyle, two alpine and two all-rounders. From

■ PUBLISHER:	SCEE	■ ORIGIN:	United States
■ DEVELOPER:	UEP-Systems	■ STYLE:	Racing game
■ RELEASE DATE:	February '97	■ PLAYERS:	One



(1) The ice man cometh. And pretty bloody quickly, too. (2) Many sports games have commentators and we reckon David Vine would have done a grand job, here. (3) Hit the barriers and you can perform the most spectacular tumbles. (4) Some boards are suited to certain disciplines. (5) Board in the twilight hours. (6) There's a big drop on the right.

here, you can choose your sex preference before opting for one of a number of different outfits – the lass with the yellow hat and knee-length strides sports particularly fetching garb. And isn't Sir bedecked in baggy finery? It don't make a heap of difference to the gameplay, of course, although your choice of board is meant to affect performance – the novice is best

downhilling on the all-rounder.

As if you didn't know, there are different types of snow, too – be it powdery, normal or icy – and the aforementioned choice of steed will determine your performance and whether you can perform points-enhancing tricks en route to the chequered flag.

Artificial competitor

Computer opponents (there isn't a two-player mode) dare you to battle and you hone your skills accordingly through the difficulty levels. It's kind of strange – as you swoop down the hill at the

start, the boarder suddenly splits in two and, behold, you've got yourself an opponent.

Sony have kindly sent us an early version so we've had chance to get a feel for the thing. Some of the sharp twists and turns are a mite difficult to negotiate but boshing the square-button makes you 'edge', or in layman's terms, turn sharply. You can also perform jumps and, as we mentioned, exact mid-air tricks. *Cool Boarders* skids along at a fair old pace and we look forward to meeting again in the near future.



You sometimes have to defy the laws of gravity and those of a collected disposition can perform some tricks



(1) The Expert course, as you'd expect, is the toughest, with 90° turns galore. There's even a river to avoid. (2) Aha, the important bit. The clothes. (3) Splendid splaying snow effect.



Choose any one of three courses – Beginner, Advanced and the very twisty and difficult Expert.



...but polygon ones can. Not to be outdone by Sony's basketball trailblazer, Konami re-enter the sporting stakes, this time promising a slicker and tougher contender



Konami's NBA licence has allowed the use of all 1996 team and player rosters. A bonus for realism fans.

NBA: In The Zone was 'not too bad a game' which may have turned more heads if it weren't for the towering

behemoth that was *Total NBA* being released slightly before it. Lesser companies would have taken one look at Sony's masterpiece and shuffled quietly off the court, vowing never to return. Konami, however, have made a few substitutions, come up with some fresh tactics, and are ready to re-enter the fray.

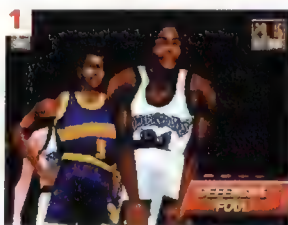
One of the main criticisms of the first title was that it was too easy. Okay, so the emphasis was on arcade play rather than sim accuracy, but if a game is to be at all challenging, it has to leave some room for error.

Revised tactics

Hardened by this complaint, the designers have returned to their drawing boards and come back with a much tougher game. For a start, the rules have been tightened up. According to Konami, there is now a much



In The Zone 2 boasts improved visuals and a new, more sim-like game experience. But can it compete with *Total NBA*?



Exciting moments like fouls [1] and gravity-defying slamdunks [2] are often followed by close-up replays.

bigger chance of being 'fouled-out' – of doing something which fails to impress the referee. Clashing against defenders or performing certain frowned-upon moves, for example, can result in the offending player being sent off. Time for a more 'hands off' approach to the game, then.

Player stamina has also entered the picture. When the play is fast and frenetic, team members flag and may have to be sent to the bench for a rest, a factor which should encourage you to be much more strategic.

Visually, many improvements have been made. The players now look much more realistic and their movements are smoother. You can even see reflections of

the players' feet in the court – a graphical touch 'inspired' by *Total*. Added to this, the elements that were successful have been accentuated. For example, *IT22* makes even better use of its NBA sponsorship than its predecessor, offering a full season option and the chance to make substitutions during play. The game is also accurately based on NBA's 1996 rosters so you get all 29 teams and 348 players from that year.

It will be tough to wrestle the title of 'benchmark basketball sim' away from *Total NBA* and even tougher to keep hold of that position when *NBA 2* appears. But Konami have at least made a 'full court press' in the right direction.



■ PUBLISHER: Konami ■ RELEASE DATE: March '97 ■ PLAYERS: One to eight
■ DEVELOPER: In-house ■ ORIGIN: Japan ■ STYLE: Sports sim

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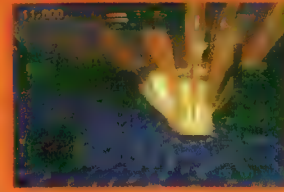
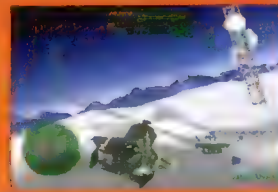
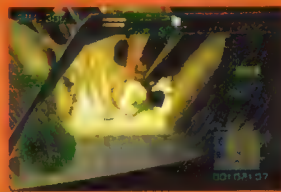
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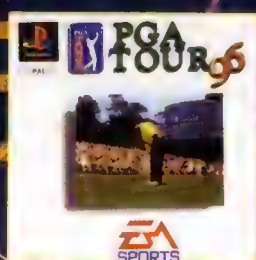
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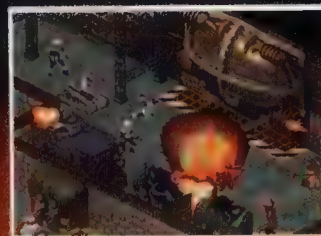
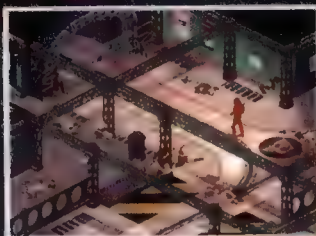
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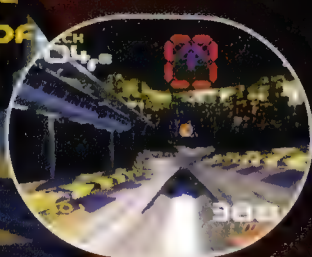
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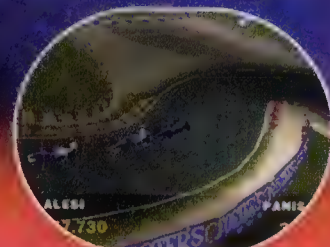
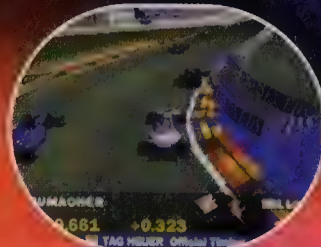
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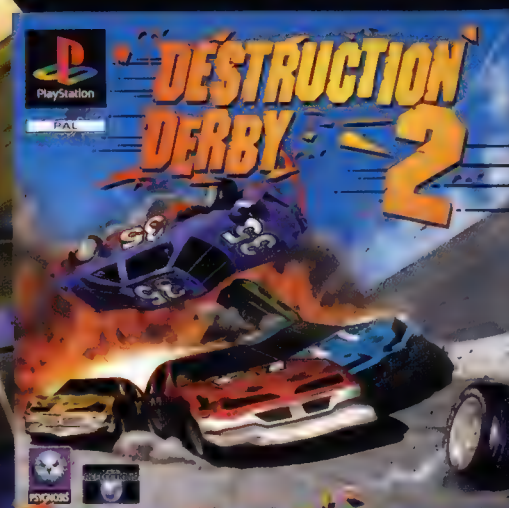
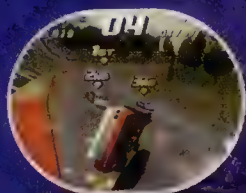
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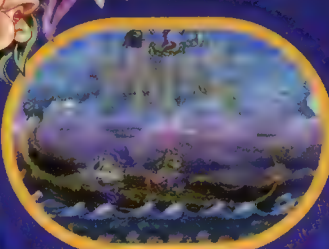


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Demo disc quality, standards of PlayStation software and the N64 are some of the subjects discussed in Feedback this month

Truckin's marvellous

I've been a PlayStation owner and a reader of *PSM* for five months and I've noticed that the subject of demo discs keeps arising in your Letters pages. What is the problem with all these people who complain? No one forces them to buy a demo and surely they don't just buy *PSM* for the disc? The mag's great and the reviews and previews have me eagerly awaiting game releases. Okay, so the demo discs could be better presented and maybe have more features, but after all it's only a demo. To read about a game in the PlayTest section and then get a playable demo can only help people to make a purchase.

The demos I have got from *PSM* have helped me choose games that I may not have bothered with otherwise. Also the demos are good fun (*Monster Trucks* being one). With the magazine and demo, you get my money every month, Here's to another year.

Ian Seville,
Pontefract

Well, there you go. Grant Whitfield hated the *Monster Trucks* demo and Ian Seville loved it. You can't please all the people all of the time, but generally we think our discs are pretty good.

Demo debacle revisited

I've read your magazine since issue 1 and I'd have to say that it's one of the best for PlayStation news, reviews and gossip. Your demo disc is what puts you head and shoulders above the rest, but I have noticed a decline in the quality of demo selection. I'm sure that most readers keep the discs, so why do the demos get repeated? (*Discworld*, *Pro Pinball* and *F1*). Is it because there's a lack of demos?

Can you also let us know why you don't print the new/updated tips/cheats for the Datel Action Replay? This is an excellent piece of hardware and the facility to be able to put new and updated codes on all games, once released, is excellent. Is it because you have close links with Sony who haven't given the

DISC-GRUNTLED READER



Having been a *PSM* reader for 12 months I've never felt the need to criticise your cover CDs – until issue 13. The *Psygnosis* 'special'? I noticed that it contained four playable demos, but I was appalled by what I found.

Wipeout 2097 was a superb demo and a fine example of what should be included on cover CDs. But I then loaded *F1*, only to discover to my horror that it was exactly the same demo as the one in issue 12. Was this some kind of joke? On further

inspection, it seemed that due to popular demand it had been placed on a cover disc for the second time. A new track or a reworked version (as with *Supersonic Racers*) I could accept, but the same demo is not on. *DD2* was a naff rolling demo instead of a playable demo, as stated, and *Monster Trucks* was at such an early stage of production it wasn't even enough to be a demo.

If I'd known the CD was going to be such poor quality, I would never have bought my subscription, as other magazines cover the same reviews for less money. As cover CDs are a major selling factor for your mag, I expect more in return for my subscription fee. I realise that the fault is not only due to you but to Sony and other games developers, so feel free to pass on these comments.

Grant Whitfield
Grindon

Sorry you feel that way, Grant. The truth is, there are a few separate issues covered here and a few distinct reasons for the events you have described. First and foremost, *F1* appeared a second time because the second disc was a *Psygnosis* special and as such, we were obliged to include it. A different demo would be nice, but software publishers can't afford to give away too much of a game free of charge, or people won't buy it. As for *DD2*, that was, to use a technical term, a right royal balls-up. When we went to press we were under the impression that the demo was to be playable. By the time we found out it wasn't, it was far too late to change the cover of the CD. Apologies all round for this one, and we hope future discs don't prove quite as disappointing.

product their stamp of approval? Sony's customer service director told me that although officially Sony haven't put their name to any Datel products, they're still considered as the best third-party hardware suppliers around, and that although third-party products can potentially harm the PlayStation in the long term, they know of no Datel product to date that has done this. So can you please consider printing the codes once they are available?

Jason Treeby,
Abingdon

Okay, for this month this is the last we're going to say on the matter of the demo discs. As already stated, *F1* was repeated because the disc was a *Psygnosis* special. To leave it out was neither an option, nor sensible. *Pro Pinball* appeared a second time because it tied in with a competition to win £5,000 worth of pinball table. Not a bad reason on the whole. And *Discworld* first appeared way back on disc one. That first issue very quickly sold out and the demands for the demo were shockingly high, so we repeated it for the benefit of those who missed the first issue and

couldn't get hold of a back issue. Sorry if that pissed a few people off but we were just trying to respond to a very real demand.

As for Action Replay codes, we can't really cover these for the same reason we can't deal with import software. We're the official PlayStation magazine, but while we maintain editorial independence as far as officially released products go, we're not in a position to devote space to unofficial software or a product that isn't endorsed by Sony.

Calibration's what you need

Concerning the letters on the apparent 'bugs' in *F1*, regarding the incompatibility with the Gamester steering wheel and pedals. You stated that there is a problem with loss of power, which I also experienced when first playing the game. After experimenting, however, I have found the solution to this problem.

When calibrating the Gamester pedals, push the brake to 100 per cent – but the throttle pedal must be pushed down to only 70 per cent. With the pedals calibrated in this way, the game plays perfectly and I've taken light years off my lap times using the Gamester.

Paul Frewer,
Thorpe

Thank you, Paul. The problems with the steering wheel are frankly becoming a bit tiresome now, so hopefully that little trick will prevent a few people from pulling all of their hair out.

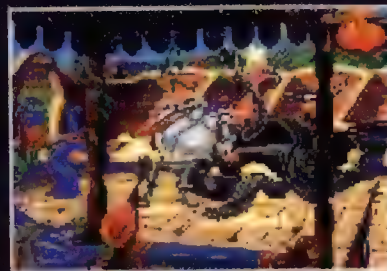
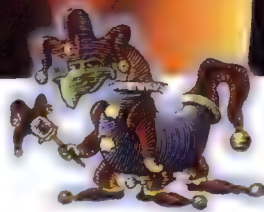
Wear and tear

I've had my PlayStation for almost a year and in the process have bought quite a few peripherals for the lovely machine. At the moment I live in a pretty busy household of five and the dregs of society that we amicably call 'friends', who often visit our PlayStation, take pretty much centre stage in our living room.

The only problem is 'People's Peripheral Preference' (PPP, as we call it). For example, some of us prefer to play ►

After all these years, Cheech still enjoys a good smoke

Blazing Dragons is a warped medieval adventure spilling from the twisted mind of Monty Python's Terry Jones. Between the wicked, kitty-hurling villains and brain-liquifying puzzles, your grip on reality (not to mention self-respect) will be seriously tested.



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Letters

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► *Wipeout 2097* with the wheel, others prefer the joypad. It gets very frustrating and, more importantly, I'm sure it can't be too healthy for the machine to keep swapping points over, especially in the middle of a loaded game.

I was wondering whether any of the bright sparks at Sony, or indeed any independent peripheral makers, are coming up with something to combat this? I wonder how easy it would be to incorporate a choice facility on the existing four-way adaptor? It might seem like the height of laziness, but with the gun coming out soon – not to mention the flight sticks – it might become a bit of a problem.

Rob, Brighton

It's a top idea, Rob. Constantly swapping peripherals does indeed cause a lot of wear and tear on the machine's contacts. However, as yet there's no news of a specially designed multi-port to remedy this. Maybe you should find an investor to help you get one into production.

Crash trash

So what happened with my demo CD (issue 12)? Where was the rest of my *Crash Bandicoot* program? You know, the bit that makes it good? Because all I had was this crappy, linear piece of jump-jump-stop-jump rubbish, very similar to those little *Mario* LCD games of the early '80s. I can't believe this is being paraded as anything like a decent platformer, let alone worthy of £45.

I've now had my PlayStation for five months. Before that I had a SNES and before that an Amiga. Both of these formats had vastly superior software – all right, they didn't look as good, but they sure as hell played better. As a sanitised, official review magazine, I suppose you are limited in your freedom to comment, but come on, the standard of original PlayStation games is not good. Even the games touted as being the best in their genre are rarely satisfying.

I know this is only one opinion and you could conveniently regard it as unrepresentative, but it was a valid, solitary opinion that said 'The Emperor has no clothes!'

Andrew Murray, Hamilton

We like lucid and challenging letters like yours and indeed your opinions are perfectly valid. First, though, let us rubbish the idea that we are not independent in terms of our game scores. Issue 13, for example, featured two games scoring a pitiful four, another scoring five, several scoring six, and many just sitting at the average seven mark. These are not the actions of a mag that is frightened of speaking the truth.

But individual opinions are what it's all

about. You didn't like *Crash*, fair enough. We did. And we'd point out that the demo represents only a small part of the game. Even we didn't like it when we first started playing it, but it's one of those titles that gets better as more of it opens up. You are

also right that there are some poor games for the PlayStation, but the idea that there is no good software at all (which is what you seem to be saying) is nonsense. For a start, we're seeing great conversions of games that did well on the Amiga, a machine you seem to view in a rather favourable light (*Syndicate* first came out on the Amiga – we're getting *Syndicate Wars*). Many universally-acclaimed PC titles have been converted to PlayStation and have improved upon the originals.

What's this 'not best in genre' comment all

about? *Doom* – best version? PlayStation. Best driving game? *Ridge Racer Revolution/Wipeout 2097/F1*. Best action/adventure? *Fade To Black/Resident Evil/Tomb Raider*. Best puzzle game? *Bust A Move 2*. Best beat 'em up? *SSFA2/MK Trilogy/Tekken 2*. Need we go on?

PlayStation Vs N64 (groan)

I recently purchased a PlayStation. Cool! I saw *F1* on a mate's demo, played *Alien Trilogy* and that was it. Four days later, I got one. But it was only because I was fed up waiting for the N64.

I'd like to know if the console market will go 64-bit crazy when Nintendo sort their lives out, making the PlayStation as cutting-edge as, well, the ZX81?

I love my PlayStation. The graphics are astonishing. So is the sound. And the games coming out give you the horn. Are

we going to be left crying into our lager when we see *Mario* in all his 64-bit glory? As the PlayStation's official mag, I would like to hear you air your uncensored view.

Daniel, Hertfordshire

We wouldn't normally enter into a console-battle debate, but clearly people are concerned about this N64 thing. First off, whenever a new console comes out, people expect their new machine to be around forever. In truth, any console is only popular for around five years, max. Of course the PlayStation won't last forever. But certainly, of all the consoles around at the moment it's by far the

become a mass-market machine and established itself as market leader, so enjoy your console safe in the knowledge that this time around, at least, you've made the right decision.

Monster Truck bonus

On demo disc 13, did anyone notice the fact that you could drive over the mountains surrounding the track in *Monster Trucks*? Plus, on the other side there are all of the other trucks that are featured in the game, as well as masses of space to try out new stunts, and so on.

To get over the mountains, when the countdown finishes, simply drive towards

In a few years time you are guaranteed to see a next-gen PlayStation that will make Nintendo's machine look dated

strongest, with an astonishing software base. It will remain strong for some years to come, by which time you'll want to move on to the next thing, anyway.

We'd be lying if we said the N64 isn't a powerful piece of kit. But certainly, when it hits the shops its software base will be pitifully small and it will take some considerable time before it even comes close to the popularity of PlayStation. And let's not forget that the way technology is going, in a few years time, you are guaranteed to see a next-generation PlayStation that, in all probability, will make Nintendo's new machine look dated.

At the moment, the smart money's on PlayStation and in a few years, we'll be having this same conversation about a whole new set of machines. This debate is only really valid for a fledgling system that has yet to capture the public's imagination. The PlayStation has already

the lefthand corner of the track and you should have enough speed to take you over the top and into the water on the other side. To find all of the other trucks once you have come over the mountains, head right. Follow the mountains a little way and you'll meet a track. Again, go right along it and you'll come to an area where all the other trucks are.

Russel Farn, Coventry

Several people wrote in to let us know about this. Thanks for the tip, and let's hope this silences some of those moaning minnies who didn't go a bundle on the *Monster Trucks* demo.

Wheel solutions

I am writing to tell those out there who have bought *F1* and the *Gamester* steering wheel how to use the bloody thing. For a start, the reason you wheel-spin all the time is because you either press the brakes too hard or slam the accelerator down when you speed up. Instead you should ease the pedals down – it is analogue after all. You should also have braking and steering assistance off.

As for lack of power, just set the acceleration at about 65 per cent, the same with brakes. Also, leave the twist at around 80 per cent and origin at around 7 per cent. You should obviously use configuration six as well. It may not be as easy as the joypad but it's a lot more realistic and a damn sight better.

Also, tell those whingeing prats to stop moaning about the front-end screen on the demo disc – it's the demos you play/watch, not the front-end screen. Sad!

Stephen Bainbridge, Bristol

Thanks for the *F1* tips. With luck, that'll stop at least some disgruntled people writing in about the steering wheel. As for the whingers, well, we couldn't possibly call them prats, but you do have a point about the importance of the front-end screen.



Sony's PlayStation has secured an impressive software base which includes many 'best in genre' titles such as *Fade To Black* [1] and *MK Trilogy* [2].

THESE COPS ARE ANIMALS



'... there's lots to
recommend about Firo & Klawd'
MEAN MACHINES PSX



85%
C&VG

Police Force? More like Police farce if you ask me.

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Letters

Q&A, Official UK PlayStation Magazine, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

Do Sony have any plans to release *Virtua Cop* on the PlayStation?

Daniel Smith,
Cheshire

No, it's a Sega game, through and through, so Sony won't be touching it with a bargepole. The PlayStation is getting *Time Crisis* from Namco soon, though. It's better than *Virtua Cop* and it'll come with a light gun featuring a special crouch-button which also featured in the coin-op. Good old Namco.

1 Will Sony be bringing out a hand-held games machine like the Game Boy/Game Gear?

2 Is it true that they're introducing an add-on for the PlayStation which will enhance the console's graphics?

3 Finally, what are *F1* buggies? I happened to notice an ad board with them on while racing on the bonus track of *F1*.

Dave Mead,
Bridgwater



1 There's no news of a hand-held Sony machine at present, and it's very unlikely that they'll develop one. Only the Game Boy really had any success and still has the market pretty much sewn up, so there'd be little point in going up against it.

2 We have heard nothing of a graphics-enhancing add-on for the PlayStation. The machine's graphics are already on the cutting edge, so the only new development will be a few years down the line when a next-gen replacement appears.

3 There's an option in *F1* for driving buggies around. Go to the Race Qualify screen, hold down SELECT and hit the following buttons: RIGHT, UP, TRIANGLE, LEFT, UP, SQUARE, TRIANGLE. A message will appear to let you know that you got the cheat right.

1 Should I buy a mouse for my PlayStation, as I may well be getting *Broken Sword*?

2 I heard that the only reason

the N64 is classed as a 64-bit machine is because it has two 32-bit processors. I found out that only one processor works at a time, NOT both working together. Surely it's illegal to sell a console with false information?

1 With regard to the release of these new black PlayStations, which allow you to design games and surf the internet via a modem – why couldn't Sony have included this feature in the original PlayStation?

Martyn Honeyball,
Chelmsford

1 Entirely up to you. It must be said, the mouse movement in *Broken Sword* isn't all that fluid but, then again, it's even worse with the joystick. At the moment, there's better stuff to spend your money on, but in the future you may find that there are enough games out there to warrant a mouse-ular purchase.

2 Talking about 32-bit and 64-bit machines is a waste of time. These days, consoles contain all sorts of specialised hardware

that carries out very specific tasks. For example, it would be possible to have a 16-bit machine with dedicated polygon processors and super-powerful, number-crunching processors that would far outperform a 128-bit machine with no dedicated hardware. The N64 is a 64-bit machine in some respects, but the argument is largely a nonsense.

3 Cost is the main issue. Not just anyone will be able to develop games on the black



PlayStation – it's not like those game-creator programs you used to be able to get for the Amiga, and so on. The black PlayStation is designed to be used in conjunction with a PC in order for amateur programmers to fully develop games from home and stimulate the re-emergence of homegrown programming talent (in the old days, most games were created by talented individuals in their bedrooms). The fact is, most people just want to play games. It's far better that the majority can just buy a stand-alone console, while the others can upgrade if they want to.

1 Is there a release date for *Micro Machines 3*, and will there be any new features, or a construction kit?

2 Which is better, *MM3* or *Supersonic Racers*?

John Phillips,
Hitchin

1 Yep, it's now coming in March '97, but there are no plans to include a construction kit or a track editor.

2 We haven't reviewed *Micro Machines 3* yet, but previous *Micro Machines* games have been stunning, so expect something very special indeed.

1 I am a big fan of *Sensible Soccer*. Any news of a PlayStation release?

2 I hear that *Actua Tennis* is to be released in the near future. Will it be any good and, more importantly, will it be better than *Sampras Extreme*?

3 What new features will be included in *Total NBA '97*?

Darren Joel

1 We very much doubt it. Great though the game was, developers seem to be concentrating on 3D soccer titles these days.

2 *Actua Tennis* is coming out in the latter half of '97. We don't know how good it will be, but *Actua Golf* and *Actua Soccer* have been very good so there's no reason to think that *Tennis* will be any less accomplished.

3 We don't currently have any features lists for *Total NBA '97*. As soon as we do we'll let you know the details.

1 In *Resident Evil*, what the hell is behind the door with the numerical code on the second floor of the mansion? And how do you get the code?

2 In earlier issues you showed pictures of the game which are not actually in it – for example,



Some scenes that were featured in early preview shots of *Resident Evil* never appeared in the final version of the game.

Barry and Jill both facing the Tyrant for the first time.

1 I have completed *Resident Evil* but I haven't faced the Tyrant a second time.

Chris O'Donoghue,
Southend On Sea

1 You have to leave the mansion and solve all the outside bits first and then you'll be made aware of the code.

There's not much of interest through the door, though – just more rooms and a few zombies.

2 Some early screen-shots were mocked up to give people an idea of what to expect. One of them showed a large snake which appeared twice as large as it eventually was, and in a different room. Don't waste your time looking for these bits.

3 What are you talking about? You don't meet the Tyrant a second time. It's possible to fail to beat the Tyrant and the game ends, but there's not a second encounter with him at any stage.

1 Are there any plans for a PlayStation 2?
2 Will it use Digital Video Disk (DVD) instead of Compact Disc?
3 Are there any plans for a virtual reality headset?

Lenny Smith,
Armagh

1 It's far too early to say at the moment, so officially there is no news. But considering the massive success Sony have experienced with their entry into the console market, it's a pretty safe bet that they'll be investing in the next-generation of console gaming also.

2 Again, we can only guess. But certainly DVD will probably find the largest part of its market in the area of DVD-ROM initially so, yes, we imagine that at some point in the future consoles will

be DVD-based. There is no reason to assume that a Sony machine would be any different.

3 We think probably not. A few VR peripherals have been developed for other systems, but the technology isn't really sophisticated enough, or cheap enough to make it viable for a home system at present.

1 Has *Destruction Derby 2* been delayed? If so, why?

2 Is *Player Manager* any good and will there be any other footie management games?

T Powell

1 Yes it has, until January. The reasons for this are a little hazy, but basically the release schedule over Christmas is frenzied so they'll be wanting to have some product available for release in the new year.

2 No, it's bloody awful (it scored 2/10 in *PSM14*). However *Championship Manager*, from Eidos Interactive, is coming in the first quarter of next year, so fingers crossed that it'll be considerably better.

1 Is the PlayStation meant to be coming down in price? In the US it came down \$100 to \$150.

2 Which is the best steering wheel available for under £60?

Craig Parnaby,
Lancs

1 There are no more price drops planned at present, so expect to pay around £199. Who knows what offers will crop up in the January sales, though?

2 The Gamester wheel is available for £60.65, or there's the Performer Turbo Wheel for £44.99. We have yet to try out the latter, though, so we can't comment on its performance.



THE JOKE'S ON YOU IF YOU DON'T GET IT.

'Pandemonium is positively
stunning... a more than
worthy contender
to Crash's Best
Platform Game
crown...
noticeably
superior'

Official UK Playstation Magazine

92%

Red Hot Award
Mean Machines/Playstation

9/10

Star Player Accolade
Official Playstation Magazine

Pandemonium!

Check out Crystal Dynamic's new website at <http://www.crystald.com>

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Highlights 1997 Preview



Official PlayStation Magazine

JAN



1997 PLAYSTATION PREVIEW
ULTIMATE 1997

The Ultimate 1997

Here it is, the ultimate guide to what you'll be playing in 1997. These are the games that all the fuss will be made about next year. We couldn't include every game of 1997 as it would fill the mag, so over the next eleven pages we've concentrated on the games that you really should know about. We've obviously focussed most on the games due out in the first quarter of next year as they're the ones on which you can be most specific, but fear not as we go right the way through the year and even tell you what you'll be playing this time next year. So sit back and relax, and let *PSM* point you in the direction of 1997.

PlayStation Preview

Winter to Spring

JANUARY IN BRIEF

Game: **Herc's Adventures**
From: **Virgin**
Style: **Adventure**



Game: **Ballblazer Champions**
From: **Virgin**
Style: **Future sport**

Game: **4-4-2**
From: **Virgin**
Style: **Footie sim**

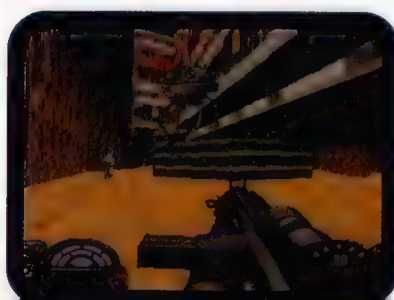
Game: **Privateer 2**
From: **Electronic Arts**
Style: **Space soap opera**

Game: **Queen: The Eye**
From: **Electronic Arts**
Style: **Graphical adventure**

Game: **Conquest Earth**
From: **Eidos**
Style: **Strategy**

Game: **Incredible Hulk**
From: **Eidos**
Style: **Platform beat 'em up**

JANUARY



Game: **Dark Forces**
Publisher: **Virgin**
Developer: **LucasArts**
Style: **3D shoot 'em up**

The plot: You play Kyle Katarn, a mercenary who has been under the employ of the Empire. However you have been tempted away to work for the Rebel Alliance instead. As you work your way through numerous, increasingly hazardous missions, you will come across many familiar characters from the films such as Jabba's Pig Guards and Storm Troopers. As the story unfolds, you will learn of the existence of mysterious Dark Troopers.

What to expect: Smart 3D graphics, fluid, shooty gameplay and some top encounters with Storm Troopers. Basically, *Doom* but with *Star Wars* characters instead of scary monsters.

In a nutshell: A *Doom* clone set in the *Star Wars* universe, can you think of anything better than that? Deserves to be abso-bleedin'-lutely huge, which it no doubt will be.

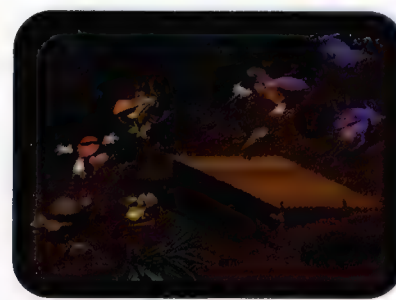


Game: **X-Files**
Publisher: **Electronic Arts**
Developer: **Fox Interactive**
Style: **Spook 'em up**

The plot: Two FBI agents in designer garb swan about, trying to solve supernatural occurrences while holding opposing views about their cases. Every possible unexplained incident takes place on a regular basis but the only real mystery is how they've survived so long without snogging each other.

What to expect: Lots of weird, inexplicable happenings, frightening graphics and an annoying bint who wouldn't even accept the possibility of life on other planets if a flying saucer flew up and bit her on the arse.

In a nutshell: A huge licence, the game is an adventure crossed with an interactive movie. Intriguing. Whether the game can capture the mystery and general spookiness of the TV show is anyone's guess, but no doubt X-philes will lap it up regardless of the quality. It will soon be out there.



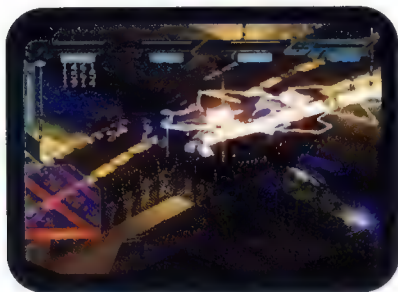
Game: **Spot Goes To Hollywood**
Publisher: **Virgin**
Developer: **In-house**
Style: **3D platformer**

In a nutshell: Very much retains the gameplay of the older *Spot* games but does it all in a sort of isometric, 3D world. Gameplay suffers slightly, but the graphics are pretty and it could appeal to real platform freaks. Not really next gen' stuff, though.



Game: **Jonah Lomu Rugby**
Publisher: **Codemasters**
Developer: **Rage Software**
Style: **Sports sim**

In a nutshell: Big burly men (in 3D no less), a ball, and lots of rolling around in the mud together. Then, of course, you feel so embarrassed that you have to reassert your manliness by singing rude songs and drinking ridiculous amounts of beer. See page 24 for further details.



Game: **Syndicate Wars**

Publisher: **Electronic Arts**

Developer: **Bullfrog**

Style: **Strategy shoot 'em up**

The plot: It's 95 years after the first syndicates. Eurocorp has been upgrading the control chips embedded in people's brains. Ten scientists have set up the Church Of The New Epoch and introduced a virus into the UTOPIA global control network. As a result, the enslaved people saw the world for what it was and moved towards the Church of The New Epoch who, in turn, used their own version of the Persuadertron to swell their ranks. Thus begins a war between the Syndicate and The Church Of The New Epoch. The player has to decide which side they will take.

What to expect: Drive-by shootings, assassinations and mass destruction, this has it all. It should be a massive seller – definitely the biggest game of the early year.

In a nutshell: Superb isometric action strategy which draws the player into its sinister, conspiratorial world and won't let go. It'll be huuuuge.



Game: **Dungeon Keeper**

Publisher: **Electronic Arts**

Developer: **Bullfrog**

Style: **RPG**

The plot: In this very original game you play the part not of the adventurer, but the dungeon keeper. Basically you are one evil mother and have to attempt to keep worthy warriors, and such like,

from breaching your empire and stealing your treasure. To help you, you have an army of evil little imps who take care of the dungeon and do your bidding. There's also a host of nasty creatures which work for you, they but may well change allegiances if you don't maintain a healthy level of wealth and power.

What to expect: A graphical treat featuring some of the most ingenious gameplay to hit the PlayStation. Peter Molyneux, bug cheese at Bullfrog, might be jacking it all in after this one and he wants to go out on a high note, so expect a frighteningly top-class product.

In a nutshell: A dungeon game in reverse. You control the dungeon and have to keep explorers out. Looks stunning and has been a long time in development. Should be massive.



Game: **Black Dawn**

Publisher: **Virgin**

Developer: **Black Ops Ent.**

Style: **Shoot 'em up**

In a nutshell: A more arcadey version of *Thunderhawk*. Splendid graphics make it one of the best games of this type available. The enemy vehicles look great and at times the action is furious.



Game: **Rebel Assault 2**

Publisher: **Virgin**

Developer: **LucasArts**

Style: **3D shoot 'em up**

In a nutshell: Mostly action-orientated gameplay involving a behind-the-hero viewpoint. Wander around the 3D levels

firing off at storm troopers like there's no tomorrow. *Star Wars* again, so it's got to be at least a bit good.



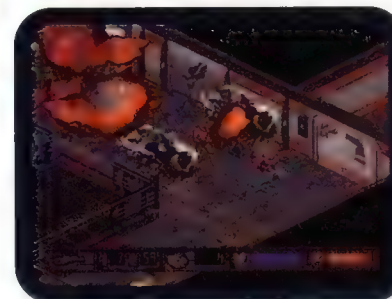
Game: **Theme Hospital**

Publisher: **Electronic Arts**

Developer: **Bullfrog**

Style: **Strategy**

In a nutshell: For strategists only. But this contains a lot of humour and may, for this reason, go down a lot better than *Theme Park*. Big fast arcade titles sell the most on consoles, but this sort of thing is just what you need to break up the monotony.



Game: **Crusader: No Remorse**

Publisher: **Electronic Arts**

Developer: **Origin**

Style: **Shoot 'em up**

In a nutshell: A slightly old-fashioned isometric blaster with a bit of switch/key puzzling and some exploration. Bound to be fun as you roam around and either kill or destroy everything around you with a variety of weapons. Great game on the PC.

Game: **Suikoden**

Publisher: **Konami**

Developer: **In-house**

Style: **RPG**

In a nutshell: A sprawling adventure which runs along very traditional RPG lines. 16-bit graphics, but it's a grand ►

JANUARY IN BRIEF

Game: **Ten Pin Alley**
From: **Electronic Arts**
Style: **Sports sim**

Game: **Brake Hill**
From: **Konami**
Style: **RPG**

Game: **Real Edge**
From: **Merit Studios**
Style: **Racing game**

Game: **Soul Blade**
From: **Namco**
Style: **Beat 'em up**

Game: **Nanotek Warrior**
From: **Virgin**
Style: **Shoot 'em up**

Highlights 1997 Preview

► tale of Chinese legend, jogs along at a decent pace and features 108 in-game characters. Existing RPG fans will enjoy its bonkers Japanese world.



Game: **Crow II: City Of Angels**

Publisher: **Acclaim**

Developer: **In-house**

Style: **3D beat 'em up adventure**

In a nutshell: Essentially a cut-down 3D beat 'em up which sacrifices depth of combat for a world in which the player can move freely around a landscape, fighting characters as he discovers them. If they get the combat right, it could be a refreshing change.

up a mixture of action, strategy and puzzle-solving in a 3D world. Looks okay but nothing to whip up a frenzy of excitement.

For further details of this EA release and indeed three other of their forthcoming titles, head for page 16.



Game: **Contra: Legacy Of War**

Publisher: **Konami**

Developer: **Appaloosa**

Style: **Shoot 'em up**

In a nutshell: A new take on a classic series of Konami blasters. This one ditches the side-on view and opts for a sort of top-down 3D view not unlike that of *Loaded*. Super-tough gameplay, but does it capture the classic gameplay of the original games?

Well we can answer that pretty quickly for you, in fact – turn to page 88 for our full PlayTest.



Game: **Perfect Weapon**

Publisher: **Electronic Arts**

Developer: **Gray Matter**

Style: **3D action adventure**

In a nutshell: Not that different from *Time Commando*. *Perfect Weapon* dishes

Game: **Mechwarrior 2**

Publisher: **Activision**

Developer: **In-house**

Style: **Shoot 'em up**

In a nutshell: The title alone suggests what may lay ahead – huge robots battling it out in a futuristic world, blowing polygon hell out of each other. These games are always quite a laugh and the PC version was something of a classic. The SNES version wasn't bad either. Expect some serious hardware and an awful lot of explosive action to start the year off. Maybe not a classic, but it'll be fairly good stuff nonetheless. For further details on the title, turn to page 20 for a full PrePlay.

FEBRUARY

Game: **Murder Death Kill**

Publisher: **Interplay**

Developer: **Shiny Entertainment**

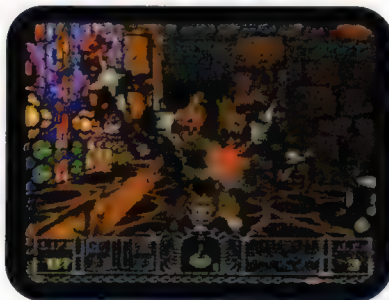
Style: **3D shoot 'em up**

The plot: Earth has come under threat from aliens, however Dr Fluke and his chum, Kurt, have the answer. Years of off-world experimentation have enabled Dr Fluke to come up with a number of devices. A bullet-proof suit, anti-radar paint, the world's smallest nuclear explosion and The Human Mortar are among the fabulous weapons created by the doctor. Armed with these amazing devices, Kurt goes off to rid the earth of this terrible alien threat.

What to expect: Dark, brooding atmosphere brought about by the subject matter and the stunning visuals. The unusual sniper gameplay should make it a significant departure from the more gung-ho 3D blasters that have proved so popular.

In a nutshell: Another attempt by Shiny

to take a game genre and polish it until it shines, while taking a very different approach to the gameplay.



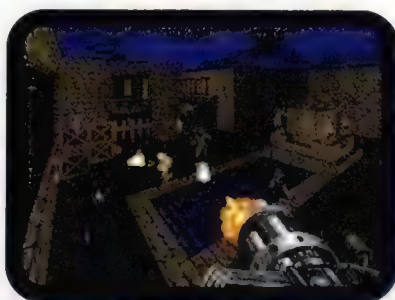
Game: **Hexen**

Publisher: **GTI**

Developer: **id**

Style: **3D shoot 'em up**

In a nutshell: Another *Doom* clone, although this one is set in a *D&D* world and is slightly more strategic and needs thinking about. Not quite as visceral as *Doom*, but should still go down a storm.



Game: **Shadow Warrior**

Publisher: **Eidos**

Developer: **Core**

Style: **3D Doom-alike**

In a nutshell: Another *Doom*-like game, but this time it takes place in Japan, where hordes of bad guys are running riot, and it's up to you, as a highly trained mercenary, to sort things out. Mostly violent action, but with a more interesting selection of weapons and skills than other games of this type. This could be very, very good indeed.

JANUARY IN BRIEF

Game: **Indestructibles**
From: **Bullfrog**
Style: **Strategy**

Game: **Incredible Hulk**
From: **Eidos**
Style: **Platform beat 'em up**

Game: **Championship Manager**
From: **Eidos**
Style: **Strategy sim**

Game: **Swagman**
From: **Eidos**
Style: **3D RPG**

"SOUND THE CHARGE. WE GO TO WAR!"

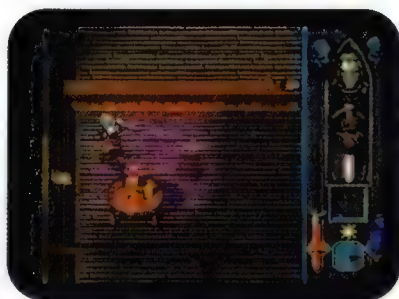


"...this is going to be
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UK WEBSITE: <http://www.mindscapeuk.com>

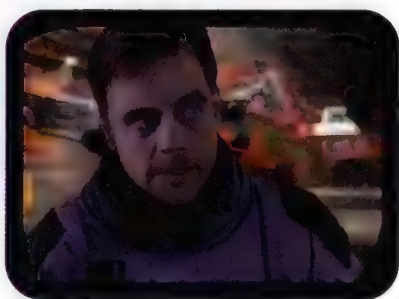
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MARCH



Game: **Legacy Of Kain**
 Publisher: **Activision**
 Developer: **Crystal Dynamics**
 Style: **Action RPG**

In a nutshell: A role-player which, refreshingly, places you in the role of an undead anti-hero whose job it is to roam around avenging his own death feeding on the blood of others. Solid traditional gameplay and an adult storyline should prove to be rather entertaining.



Game: **Wing Commander IV**
 Publisher: **Electronic Arts**
 Developer: **Origin**
 Style: **Space soap opera**

In a nutshell: Amazing video sequences with a the odd bit of shooting thrown in as a diversion. A multi-disc extravaganza and should do well, although it might be a bit too multimedia for console gamers.

Game: **Pitfall 3D**
 Publisher: **Activision**
 Developer: **In-house**
 Style: **3D platform adventure**

In a nutshell: Described as a cross between *Tomb Raider* and *Mario 64*. If it manages to capture the essence of either of those tremendous games, it will be the biggest hit on the PlayStation yet.



Game: **Need For Speed 2**
 Publisher: **Electronic Arts**
 Developer: **In-house**
 Style: **Racing game**

In a nutshell: The first game, though a little rosey, found favour among race fans, mostly because of its realistic handling. Building on that success, the sequel should be an altogether more polished experience.

Game: **Hyperblade**
 Publisher: **Activision**
 Developer: **Wizbang Software**
 Style: **Future sport**

In a nutshell: Full combat hockey, extremely violent – but let's face it, these things never sell very many and the PC version bombed.



Game: **Resident Evil 2**
 Publisher: **Virgin**
 Developer: **Capcom**
 Style: **Adventure shoot 'em up**

In a nutshell: Well who's going to bet against this going to number one. Looks and plays better than the first. It can't fail. Already in the States they are getting excited about this one, and with more characters, puzzles and bigger playing areas who can blame them?

Game: **Creation**
 Publisher: **Electronic Arts**
 Developer: **Bullfrog**
 Style: **Strategy**

In a nutshell: An environmentally-friendly strategy game with a bit of shooting thrown in. Protect the undersea creatures. A game for bean-eaters. Pah! Who's for a Big Mac?



Game: **Descent 2**
 Publisher: **Interplay**
 Developer: **In-house**
 Style: **3D shoot 'em up**

In a nutshell: *Doom* in a spaceship. The first one didn't do too well and sequels never sell as much as the first. Shame, though, because it's actually a tremendous title.

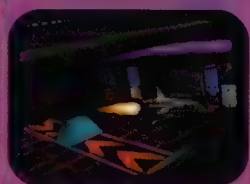
Game: **Rock 'N' Roll Racing 2**
 Publisher: **Interplay**
 Developer: **In-house**
 Style: **Racing game**

In a nutshell: Solid racing and a thumping soundtrack. In a market full of great racers, though, this is likely to feel a little dated and not quite fire people's interest enough to make it a big hit.

Game: **Star Trek: SF Academy**
 Publisher: **Interplay**
 Developer: **In-house**
 Style: **Adventure**

In a nutshell: Big licence which is let down by dodgy gameplay and control systems. Tries to be too realistic and isn't exciting as a result. Still, something for Trekkies to look forward to.

MARCH IN BRIEF



Game: **Darklight**
 From: **Electronic Arts**
 Style: **Adventure**

Game: **Ninja**
 From: **Eidos**
 Style: **Fighting game**

Game: **The Hive**
 From: **Viacom**
 Style: **Shoot 'em up**



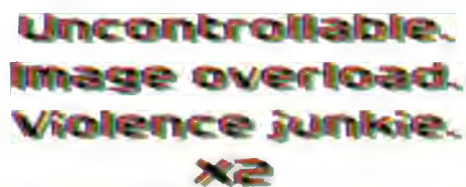
Game: **Wreckin Crew**
 From: **Telstar**
 Style: **Racing game**

Game: **Castlevania**
 From: **Konami**
 Style: **Platform adventure**

Game: **Premier Manager '97**
 From: **Anco**
 Style: **Strategy**

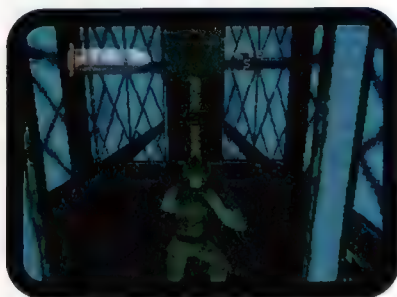


USE IT OR LOSE IT.



Orbitals plasma van-de-graf reverse twist devastate ripple pulse named
cloud stealth 50hz trigger speech seamless multiple 255 line solid
model true colour transparent rotational scale glare smooth

Highlights 1997 Preview



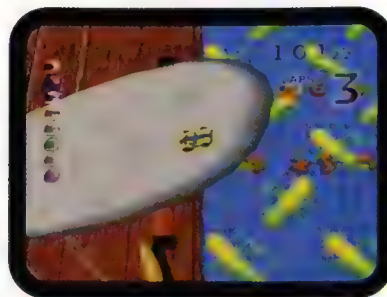
Game: **Excalibur 2555AD**

Publisher: **Telstar**

Developer: **Tempest**

Style: **Adventure**

In a nutshell: An adventure title that, while adequately playable, doesn't quite have the profile of, say, *Broken Sword*, and will probably not do quite as well. All the same, Telstar rate this one and so we'll keep an eye on it.



Game: **Micro Machines 3**

Publisher: **Codemasters**

Developer: **In-house**

Style: **Racing game**

In a nutshell: Well, the classic top-down racer gets a slightly 3D look, but remains largely unchanged as far as the gameplay goes. A good thing, considering the previous *MM* games were some of the best racers ever.



Game: **Porsche Challenge**

Publisher: **SCEE**

Developer: **In-house**

Style: **Racing game**

In a nutshell: A real competitor to the *Ridge Racer* series. This smart racer will feature real-time lighting effects and new tracks which appear as the player improves. Plus you get to drive the new Porsche Boxster – no bad thing.



Game: **Mass Destruction**

Publisher: **BMG**

Style: **Shoot 'em up**

Game: **Deathtrap Dungeon**

From: **Eidos**

Style: **Adventure**

Game: **Zoop**

Publisher: **Bastion**

Style: **Puzzle game**

APRIL

Game: **Grand Theft Auto**

Publisher: **BMG**

Developer: **DMA Designs**

Style: **Top-down racer**

In a nutshell: A decidedly uninspiring game (in its previous incarnations) which involves speeding around the city, robbing banks and avoiding the police, and so on. A great message to send to our kids, eh?



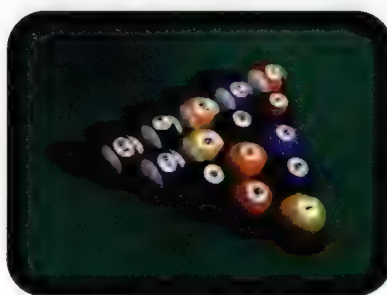
Game: **Actua Soccer: Club Edition**

Publisher: **Gremlin**

Developer: **In-house**

Style: **Sports sim**

In a nutshell: *Actua Soccer* is one of the best footie games around. This will follow the same format but will come with all the latest Premiership squads. Sounds tremendous for stats fans and footie fans alike.



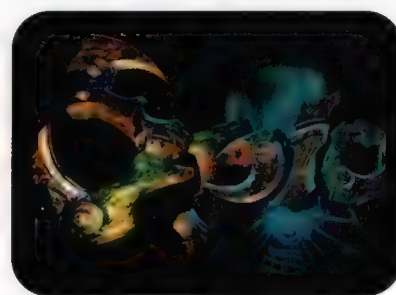
Game: **3D Pool**

Publisher: **BMG**

Developer: **NMS**

Style: **Sports sim**

In a nutshell: A 3D pool game. You're either into it or you're not. For those who are, this'll be a great way to waste an evening.



Game: **Spider**

Publisher: **BMG**

Developer: **Boss Studios**

Style: **Platformer**

In a nutshell: The game engine is very like *Cheesy's*. You play a spider who crawls around the pipe-like levels shooting at gun emplacements, and so on. Not very spidery at all really.

Game: **Hard War**

Publisher: **Gremlin**

Developer: **In-house**

Style: **3D strategy/action**

In a nutshell: A game that is being compared to *Elite* but is a whole lot more besides. If the player wants to, he can simply fly one of seven Moth craft and trade in order to make his fortune. Also a great mystery to be solved within this scenario adds to the play.

Game: **Sandwarriors**

Publisher: **Gremlin**

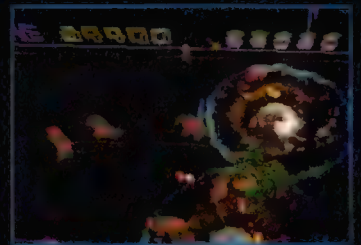
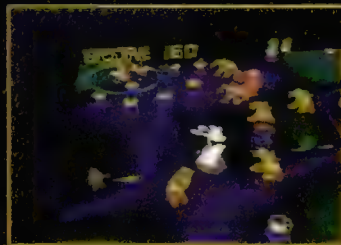
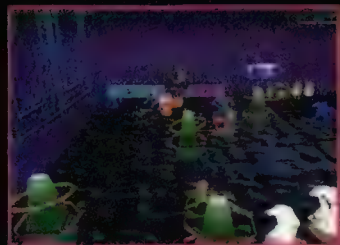
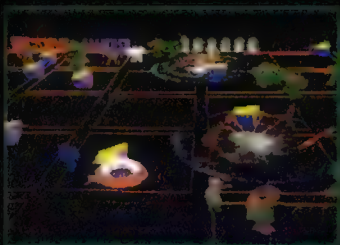
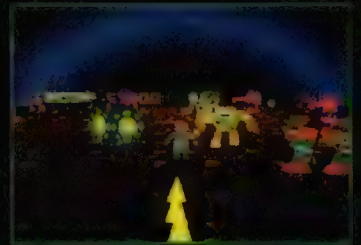
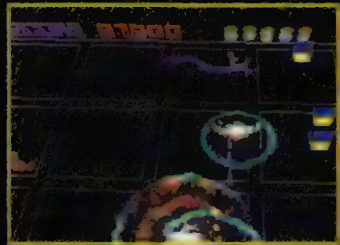
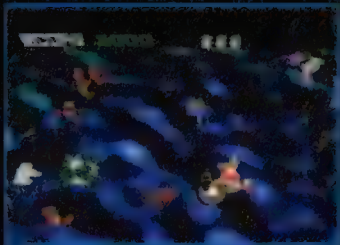
Developer: **In-house**

Style: **3D shoot 'em up**

In a nutshell: Takes place on the planet Tawy where a strange Psuedo-Egyptian war is taking place. Opposing houses of Set and Osiris are battling it out and you have to pilot your ship through 30 dangerous missions.



PlayStation



MAY

Game: **Deadly Skies**

Publisher: **Virgin**

Developer: **In-house**

Style: **Shoot 'em up**

In a nutshell: A head-to-head dogfighting game which is a bit odd in that the planes have special moves. So it's a sort of dogfight/beat 'em up sort of thing.



Game: **Transport Tycoon**

Publisher: **MicroProse**

Developer: **In-house**

Style: **Strategy**

In a nutshell: Think *A-Train*. Isometric strategy game in which you set up a community, sort out their transport network, make loads of money, then develop the place.

JUNE



team of 100 designers have worked on this, so expect an RPG which puts everything before it to shame. Coming on two discs, *FFVII* will be not only the largest, but most graphically sumptuous RPG ever created.

In a nutshell: Classic RPG action, but with amazing visuals. Without doubt the biggest RPG to date. Should be the big game of the summer without a doubt.



should be worth a look. Will it beat *Tekken 2*, though? Doubtful.

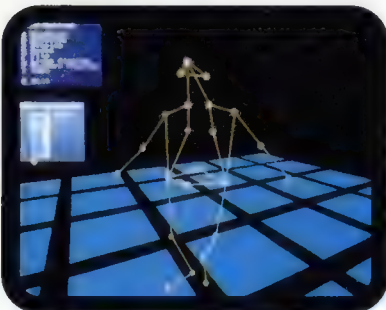
Game: **Arms Race**

Publisher: **Gremlin**

Developer: **In-house**

Style: **3D shoot 'em up**

In a nutshell: A tank battle game with a bit of strategy and problem-solving thrown in. And it all takes place in a *Reloaded*-style environment. Perfect recipe for success.



Game: **3D Basketball**

Publisher: **BMG**

Developer: **Crystal Dynamics**

Style: **Sports sim**

In a nutshell: The title says it all. Next generation graphics, and as much hoop action as you could ever wish for. Is it fun, though? Don't know. A more serious slant on basketball than the likes of *NBA Jam*.

Game: **Final Fantasy VII**

Publisher: **Virgin**

Developer: **Capcom**

Style: **RPG**

The plot: The Shinra Company discover a mysterious new form of energy called Makoh and take over all the world's markets. The company's oppressive tactics are despised by the population and as a result a secret organisation called Avalanche plans to attack and undermine Shinra. In a bar, the main character, Cloud, is approached by Avalanche to join them. He is offered a massive amount of money to bomb the Makoh reactor. Being an ex-soldier, he agrees to this most dangerous of missions. Avalanche lead him to the reactor and his adventure begins.

What to expect: Where do you start? A

Game: **Actua Tennis**

Publisher: **Gremlin**

Developer: **In-house**

Style: **Sports sim**

In a nutshell: Now familiar motion capture techniques will give it that realistic look. There will be singles, doubles, ladders and single match options as well as full commentary.

Game: **As yet untitled**

Publisher: **Eidos**

Developer: **Core Design**

Style: **Fighting game**

In a nutshell: Untitled, 'nuff said. Core are on a roll at the moment, so this

Game: **Hardball 5**

Publisher: **Accolade**

Developer: **In-house**

Style: **Sports sim**

In a nutshell: Yet another baseball game from the masters of baseball games. A lot of people don't like console baseball games, but we do. This should be just as playable as all the other hardball games, only this time, we'll have the added bonus of proper polygonal players and stadia.

JULY IN BRIEF

Game: **Thunderhawk II**
From: Core
Style: Shoot 'em up

Game: **Samurai Lord**
Publisher: Toki
Style: Adventure

Game: **Rage Racer**
Publisher: Namco
Style: Racing sim

exXtreme gameplay warning

ROBOTRON[™]

200 level alert

 **MIDWAY**



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Summer to Autumn

SEPTEMBER



Game: **Populous 3**

Publisher: **Electronic Arts**

Developer: **Bullfrog**

Style: **God sim**

In a nutshell: Extremely challenging strategy which deserves to do well, but may just miss the boat due to its now dated format. The absence of a straightforward God game may help.



Game: **3D Baseball**

Publisher: **BMG**

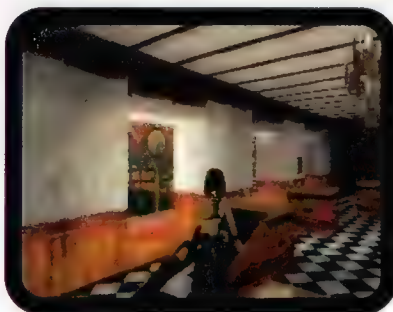
Developer: **Crystal Dynamics**

Style: **Sports sim**

In a nutshell: It's baseball in 3D. Mind you, we can't think of a single baseball game that hasn't been in 3D, so it's no big deal. No doubt it'll contain some whizzy motion-captured action, though.



NOVEMBER



Game: **Tomb Raider 2**

Publisher: **Core**

Developer: **In-house**

Style: **3D platform shooter**

The plot: Um, Lara, fresh from her exploits in *Tomb Raider*, gets tired of adventuring and decides to go on a quest to find the most handsome men on the planet. Her investigations lead her to Bath where she discovers some blokes who work on a PlayStation mag. So enamoured is she, that she decides to live with them all and service their every need. Hmmm... Oh sorry, we went into a bit of a daydream there. The fact is, *Tomb Raider 2* only exists in storyboard form at the moment, and as a result, there's absolutely no information on it, other than the fact that it will be all sorted in time for Christmas next year. ►

Same again barman

Everybody likes originality, but let's face it, some games are so good that, when you've finished them, you just want to go back and do it all again. Here are our nominations for the Top Five Sequels Of '97. This quintet should do the business again.

1. Tomb Raider 2

The original was arguably the game of the year, a complete surprise which stunned the PlayStation world. The pressure's on now to do it all again.

massive, puzzley, action-based blaster. And with the same brilliant mix of gameplay on the way we shouldn't be let down.

2. Actua Soccer 2

Forget FIFA and Adidas Power Soccer, this was the footy game that everybody fell for. Gremlin's shooting star is set for two sequels, this should be the pick.

5. Need For Speed 2

Despite the high fun factor, this was not perfect but still immensely enjoyable. Every indication is that EA have tightened up the game for the sequel as this could be huge.

3. Resident Evil 2

More characters and bigger playing levels, plus a new storyline, but still the same gameplaying brilliance. Due very soon and eagerly awaited.

And, the prize for Sequel We're Least Likely To Hold Our Breath For goes to...

Rayman 2

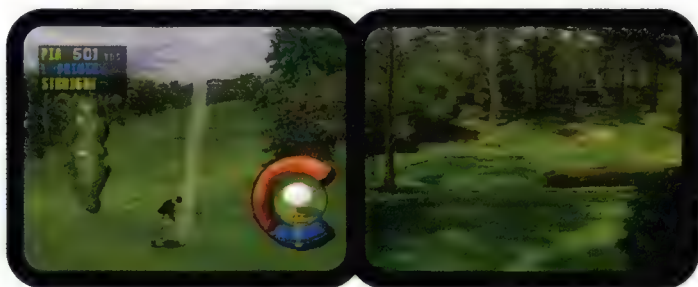
Okay so the original wasn't terrible, but it wasn't the greatest game in the world and with *Resident Evil* and *Tomb Raider* arriving on the scene cute platformers could be on their way out. Starting with this one.

4. Descent 2

The original *Descent* which we reviewed back in PSM4 was a

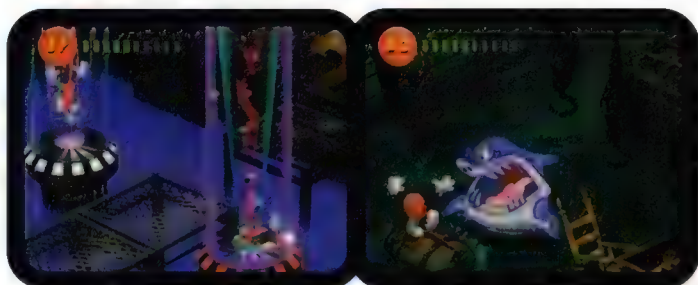
About time too...

What is going on? These days, after the initial story about a new game release it can seem like a lifetime before the bloody thing comes out. Whether it's because of development problems or just because the game takes an age to code, delays are annoying. Here are a few of the titles that we've been eagerly awaiting throughout '96 and still won't get to play until long after Santa's packed up his beard and kissed Rudolf goodbye for another year.



3. Actua Golf

First mentioned in *PSM2*, we expected some top 3D golfing action. Sadly the developers seemed to have a pretty poor handicap and throughout the next year they dropped shots all over the place, not getting the game out until now. Gremlin played a real quadruple bogey with this one.



2. Spot Goes To Hollywood

This one was looking pretty finished when we featured it in *PSM1*. But only now is it creeping its way towards the general public. Delays of this monumental nature are bad news. The trouble is, *Spot* is a novel isometric slant on the platform genre, and while this may have been a novelty in the early days of PlayStation, we have since seen the likes of *Pandemonium*, *Crash*, and so on, which make *Spot* look rather silly.



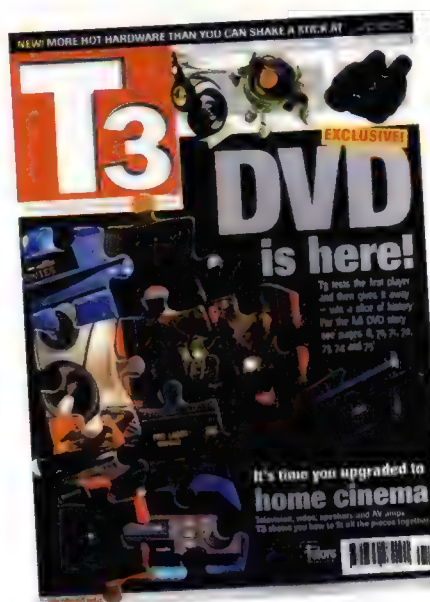
1. Chronicles Of The Sword

This is the mother of all delays. We reviewed *Chronicles Of The Sword* way back in issue 7. In the event, this cheesy game didn't get a release in the end. But is it delayed for a month or two? Oh, no, *COTS* is now not scheduled for release until November '97. That's gotta be some record.

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► **What to expect:** Again, it's too early to say, but taking into account the very tiny grumbles about the first game, we reckon it'll be more of the same, but with improved graphics, a slightly more intelligent roving camera and probably the inclusion of a few more enemy encounters. Oh, and some puzzles will hopefully be slightly tighter so there's less aimless running around. Other than that, keep it the same as it was before please, Core. Thank you.

In a nutshell: They could release the original again and it would still sell loads. If this is half as good as the original then it will be amazing.

special moves as they face hordes of opposing characters. As the story unfolds you'll meet a number of characters such as the deadly Striker, the belligerent Defender, the mad leaping Go'lee and the mysterious, black clad Ba-staad who is blind and universally hated. Oh yes, a great adventure awaits as you try to unravel myriad puzzles and seek answers to such questions as 'What is the secret of the Offsyde?', 'What is this Penalty that is awarded to fallen warriors?' and 'Where's the Bloody Defence?'

What to expect: The best 3D footie simulation ever. The first *Actua Soccer* was a peach, but expect even better graphics, and a game engine that plays faster, smoother and more precisely.

In a nutshell: In a writhing mass of footie games, this is the one most likely to stand head and shoulders above the competition.



Game: **Bubsy 3D**

Publisher: **TBC**

Developer: **Accolade**

Style: **Platformer**

In a nutshell: Certainly when we looked at it in the last issue *Bubsy 3D* was coming on a treat as a platformer but in the absence of a current publisher there may be some delays with its release.



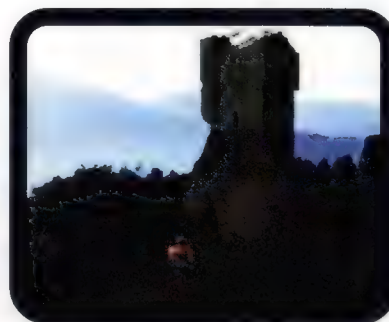
Game: **Actua Soccer 2**

Publisher: **Gremlin**

Developer: **In-house**

Style: **Sports sim**

The plot: Sent on a quest to place the mystic orb of Mitre into the tangled depths of the forest of Go'aal, our team of heroes have to use their range of



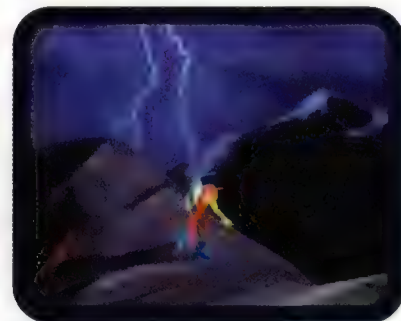
Game: **Chronicles Of The Sword**

Publisher: **Psygnosis**

Developer: **In house**

Style: **Adventure**

In A Nutshell: A not very good adventure when we reviewed it some time ago. In the next 11 months they'll have to tweak it beyond recognition for it to do the business. Games that slip this much can often be a disappointment when they arrive. Let's hope not, eh?



Game: **The Wild 9's**

Publisher: **Virgin**

Developer: **Shiny Entertainment**

Style: **Platformer**

In a nutshell: Another that impressed us in the last issue and platform guru Dave Perry has never let us down before. On which is an appropriate note to end.

Our prediction for most hyped game of 1997

As games get bigger and more impressive with their 3D graphics and fantastically illustrated storylines, so there's more opportunity (and need) to massively promote the games and bring in big sales figures. Due to its ludicrous level of hype, along with its deservedly high ratings and blanket coverage across all magazines in the industry, PSM's prediction for the most hyped game of 1997 is... *Tomb Raider 2*. Why do we think this will be the most hyped game of next year? Well, just take a look at the evidence we've collated so far.

This year, *Tomb Raider* opened people's eyes to the PlayStation's



true capabilities. A superb storyline and absolutely stunning main character would have guaranteed the game's success regardless. But coupled with that is Core's massive promotional spend. Half a million quid – yes £500,000 – is being spent on *Tomb Raider's* promotion. This includes cinema ads, TV ads, a range of merchandise in the new year and a number of licensing deals (yet to be announced, but a *Tomb Raider* cartoon's a safe bet). Lara Croft is the most recognisable videogame character in a long time and her name is on everyone's lips. So by the time the sequel appears in November, Core Design will be ready to gear up for a second media blitz.

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PSM's rating

PSM is prepared to award a golden '10' to games which are perfect. A splendid piece of software recommended without prejudice. Very, very good. Add it to your collection forthwith, if not sooner. A great title with minor irritations, but still a worthy purchase. A case of 'Why did they do that?'. Playable but with some dodgy bits. Straight average. Unoriginal or flawed, but still worth buying - just. Below average. Probably has some serious gameplay or lifespan flaws. Looking pretty bad. Maybe worth borrowing for a couple of days. Borderline crap. Technically inept, poorly structured and short-lived. A product without merit of any sort. Naff beyond human endurance. Black coffee coaster in the shape of a CD. Dreadful, awful tat.



72 Reloaded

76 FIFA '97

78 Suikoden

82 Project X2



84 Command & Conquer

88 Contra: Legacy Of War

90 Namco Museum Vol 3

94 ISS Deluxe



96 Tempest X

99 Iron & Blood

101 NBA '97

103 WWF: In Your House

104 Riot

105 Ayrton Senna Kart Duel



(1) Shoot items such as the military tents to get powered-up. (2) This firing squad area is particularly gruesome. (3) Hot stuff. (4) The fourth level involves many raised walkways.

Reloaded

Seven – a superbly dark and foreboding creation full of horrific surprises. **Seven** was also the score awarded to **Loaded** in *PSM2*.

Sadly, the coincidences stop there



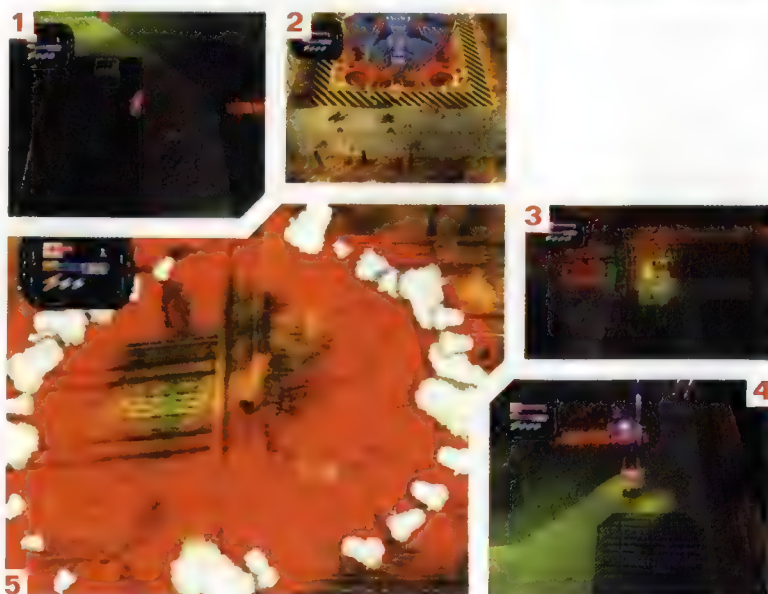
There are many contradictions within *Reloaded*, and as both game and concept it flatters to deceive. That said, it can be a lot of fun. And you'll forgive a lot of people a lot of things in the name of fun.

The first paradox surrounds the graphical depiction of the game's characters. Each is a detailed 2000AD-style representation of a distinct individual, replete with humorous and complex personality traits, and vastly differing attributes. These imaginative creations, deemed worthy of TWO covers for The World's Best-Selling PlayStation Magazine™, are synonymous with the game's image. To say they use artistic licence, however, is an understatement. The in-game sprites are so diminutive it could be your mum lugging around an Uzi and you wouldn't recognise her, the only discernable differences being slight variations in shape, size and colour of the characters, and the style of projectiles they produce.

A further irony to all of this is that the backgrounds within the game are actually very, very good. Detailed, textured and full of excellent effects, they convey vastly differing atmospheres within each level. Mystic desert wastelands give way to dark foreboding refineries with ease, hiding the fact that a sad little sprite is waddling or mincing his way around these exciting settings. All of this is viewed in more of an isometric perspective than before, allowing a far better window on the action. Action which, incidentally, is much easier to follow now that it's less frenetic. The overall effect, then, is a great-looking game in spite of the characters rather than because of them.

The second conflicting aspect is

the emphasis on blood. To be specific, **fatal gunshot wounds leading to extreme, nay complete, blood-loss due to total disintegration of the body**. Basically, the enemies explode. While this all sounds horrendous and lends well to marketing shock tactics, it isn't really that disturbing. The cartoon violence brings to mind flies splattering on your windscreen, rather than *Terminator*-style massacre. It isn't that different to shooting a Galaxian, and the blood merely serves as an indication that your latest attacker is dead, as well



(1) Get down, Shep. (2) So that's what happened to the Millennium Falcon. (3) Lifts like these can be hidden behind walls which need to be blasted away. (4) You're going to die like a dog. Quite literally. (5) If all else fails, just let a smart bomb off and watch mass destruction abound.



PUBLISHER:

Gremlin

DEVELOPER:

In-house

RELEASE DATE:

January

ORIGIN:

UK

PRICE:

£49.99

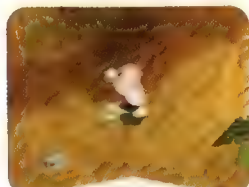
STYLE:

Shoot 'em up

Character assassination

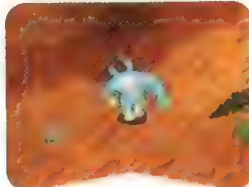
Character 1

Sister Maggie is fast-moving and a master of extortion. He looks like a terminator exo-skeleton up close, but like a snowflake on the screen.



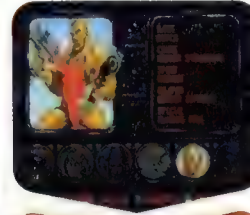
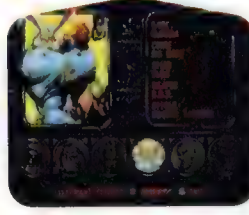
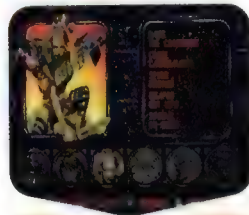
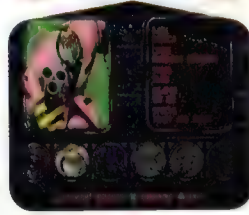
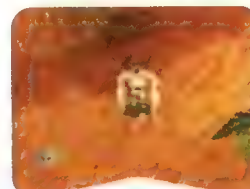
Character 3

The consumer boasts hot lips and cannibal instincts, but would be hard pushed to fit anybody in a stomach that small. Looks like an ant in a dress.



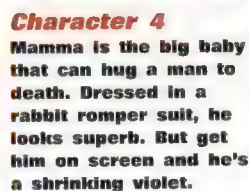
Character 5

Butch is probably the best character to play as, but not the easiest to recognise. His gorgeous assets are sadly hidden by the diminutive graphics.



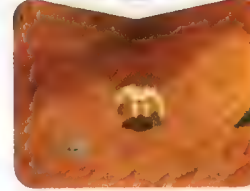
Character 2

Bounca is slow-witted teddy boy with a penchant for fighting and flash clothes. Yet in the context of the game he is no more than a shrimp with a gun.



Character 4

Mamma is the big baby that can hug a man to death. Dressed in a rabbit romper suit, he looks superb. But get him on screen and he's a shrinking violet.



Character 6

Cap 'n' Hands is one of the better represented characters within the game, but even so, you have to ask whether he's a worthy version of his artistic self.

as a *Hansel and Greta*-type trail to show where you've been already. You won't need to hide behind cushions and kids don't need to be supervised. So, yes, there is blood, but it's by no means a primary constituent of the game.

Ah, yes, the game. Moving on from these incongruous packaging sub-issues it may well be worth discussing the gameplay itself, what with *PSM* being a PlayStation games magazine and everything. **Good news is that it's an improvement on the original. Bad news is that it's not much of an improvement.** Still owing much to 8-bit and 16-bit predecessors, the gameplay is reminiscent of *Chaos Engine* and, more recently, *True Lies* on the SNES. Like the original, you spend much of your time walking around levels blasting anything that crosses your path. More emphasis this

Still owing much to 8-bit and

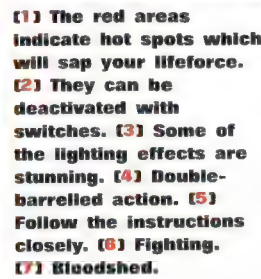
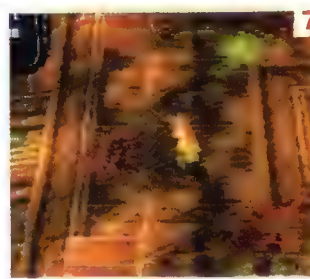
16-bit predecessors, the gameplay is reminiscent of *Chaos Engine* and,

more recently, *True Lies* on the SNES



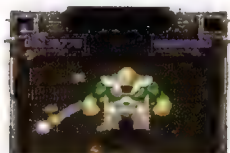
time, however, has been placed on puzzle-solving as part of the deal. While this provides a welcome diversion at times, it's not as successful as it might have been. The player is faced with a few puzzles each level, and while they can be mildly taxing, more often than not you can stumble upon an answer. You're not rewarded for making any speedy solutions and so by trolling about a whole level you'll eventually solve everything by default as a result of going everywhere and shooting everything.

The learning curve for all this is fairly good, but again it never really takes you as far as it might. After a dyer introductory level, involving much shooting ▶



[1] The red areas indicate hot spots which will sap your life force. [2] They can be deactivated with switches. [3] Some of the lighting effects are stunning. [4] Double-barrelled action. [5] Follow the instructions closely. [6] Fighting. [7] Bloodshed.

In loving memory



Smash TV

The seminal top-down shooter, eight-way movement and frantic action abounds as you blast your way to fun, fun, fun. Midway were the boys responsible for creating this and, in turn, a whole genre.



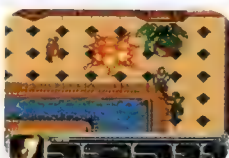
Chaos Engine

One of the seminal isometric shooters which transferred from Amiga to consoles with ease. The famous Bitmap Brothers were at the helm and what a superb job they did. Gameplay like this is great on any format.



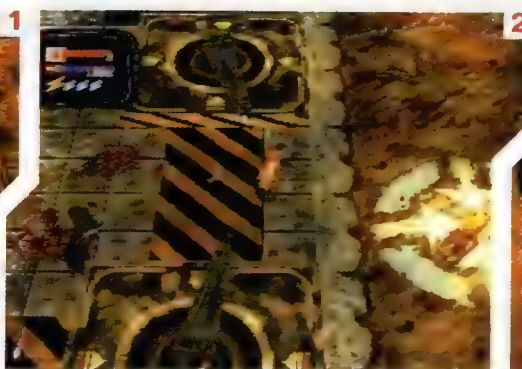
Alien Breed

The game that made Team 17. An Amiga hit which saw you blow the crap out of every little alien sprite which dared to walk its isometric levels. Great fun, it lends more than a little something to Reloaded.

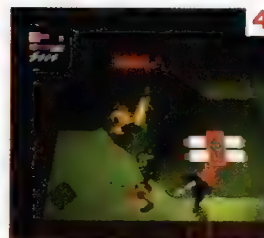


True Lies

A massively underrated game on the SNES which saw Arnie accurately act out the whole film in game form. Loads of missions, great action and huge levels made this one of the best isometric shooters of its time.



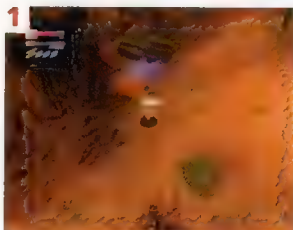
(1) This guy with the back-pack is a bugger to shoot. (2) And these massive guns are a bugger to avoid. Luckily they're reasonably easy to destroy. (3) At the end of the intro level, hand your worms to this hippy and you're safely home. (4) For some reason, it is just as difficult to kill the dogs as it is the guard with the gun. (5) Some levels have good perspectives.



► and rock-rolling, level two sees you encounter your first puzzle. And while it's graphically fairly satisfying, there is a definite 'Well-is-that-it?' factor. Level three cranks the blasting up to 11 and involves a puzzle made up of greater components, but it's not until level four that the puzzle factor really kicks in, with lifts and teleports the order of the day. So far so good, but it never really pushes the boat that much farther out and eventually it is frustration that follows rather than satisfaction.

Now at this point, if a light bulb has just flashed above your head and you're re-reading the opening paragraph where this scribe promised that the game was fun, thinking 'where's the fun in all this?', then let us reassure you that fun is to be had. Mindless blasting and simple puzzle-solving can be

(1) In the first level you must collect six bright green worms such as this one, lurking beneath a rock. (2) This level involves much blasting. (3) A very tall shrine.



Mindless blasting and simple puzzle-solving

can be fun... With a cutting-edge title

like this, though, us cynical

videogame critics want our pound of flesh

fun, and is the premise for many a classic videogame. With a cutting-edge title like this, though, us cynical videogame critics want our pound of flesh. We're prepared to give games the benefit of the doubt, but once bitten, twice shy: while *Loaded* can get away with being a fun underachiever, *Reloaded* can't. You'll have fun, but it may not be the type of fun that the hype might lead you to expect. The improvements to gameplay keep this game anchored at seven out of ten, with eight still a long way off.



Alternatively...

<i>Reloaded</i>	7/10	PSM15
<i>Loaded</i>	7/10	PSM2
<i>Project Overkill</i>	7/10	PSM12
<i>Steel Harbinger</i>	8/10	PSM13

VERDICT

GRAPHICS:

Sensational scenery **8**

GAMEPLAY:

Slightly improved **7**

SOUND:

Thumps along happily **8**

PRESENTATION:

As good as ever **8**

LIFESPAN:

Frustration sets in **6**

ORIGINALITY:

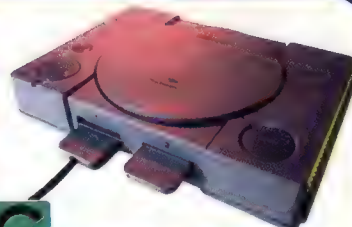
A little **3**

Not the puzzle-laden bloodfest you might expect, but a mindless blast all the same. Fun for a while, frustrating at length and worthy of no more than the original's score.

7
out of 10

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PSX



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(1) Some of the camera angles take you, as Mr Sky Sports might say, 'right to the heart of the action'. (2) The indoor game is an interesting novelty, but no more. (3) It takes an age for the scoring team to jog back into position. (4) Celtic v Rangers, five-a-side. (5) Pre-match formation jogging alert.

FIFA '97

Des, Motty, Andy Gray. **What a dream commentary team.** Lo, are they not on the virtual gantry at EA's **virtual stadium?** Why yes. Step forth, the **1997 incarnation** of this **licence to print money...**

With the benefit of hindsight, we were perhaps a little generous when we awarded the rather stodgy *FIFA '96* seven out of 10. It made its debut before *Actua Soccer* and *Adidas Power Soccer* which both proved superior opponents upon entering stage left. It isn't so much the gameplay, which, although tricky, is comprehensive; it's just that the visuals are disappointing. The graphics are fuzzy and the 'animation' technique that EA insist on labouing with ensures the players run like constipated gazelles. One year on, *FIFA '97* jogs energetically down the

The game looks better, with cleaner graphics, and the player movement is far less exaggerated. Gold stars to our Canadian coding cohorts

tunnel. Load the fellow up and play a friendly match. Now take it away. 'Hello, Desmond Lynam here, and welcome to today's big match between Cremonese and Cagliari. It's an absolutely perfect afternoon for football, the weather has been warm and the pitch is in perfect condition. Now we're all set for the kick, so let's go over to Andy Gray and first John Motson.' There then follows a seamless passing of the mike to Motty and



(1) Random drug-testing is not yet obligatory in computer games. He does look pale, though. (2) The five-a-side keepers are prone to awful errors.

pundit Andy Gray. 'Well thank you, Desmond, and welcome to today's game and to my co-commentator, Andy Gray, who'll be bringing you his own pearls of wisdom.' It's mighty impressive and it really sets the scene for the action to follow.

Yes, commentary in football games has taken a couple of steps forward from Andy Gray's overblown, melodramatic performance in *Striker '96*. There are a few variations on the introduction from Des and co, and although the voice-overs are far from perfect, it's still a vast improvement on the rantings of yore.

The game looks better, too, with cleaner, crisper



PUBLISHER:	Electronic Arts	DEVELOPER:	EA Canada
RELEASE DATE:	Out now	ORIGIN:	Canada
PRICE:	£44.99	STYLE:	Sports sim

(1) 'But it wasn't me, lads'. Everyone scarpers in different directions from the man in the middle. (2) Get your chequebook out for the lads. Tomas Brodin, anybody? Damn. (3) Old Firm five-a-side. It's impossible to play using the 'Ball Cam'. (4) FIFA '97 is the closest any football game has come to creating a real big match atmosphere. (5) Another dodgy camera angle. (6) And some more... (7) Precise strip detail.



graphics and the player movement is far less exaggerated. Gold stars all round to our Canadian coding cohorts.

By Jove, it's fiddly, though. Working your way through the plethora of moves takes quite a while and getting used to the manual player swapping takes an age – you only need to do this when you haven't got the ball. Too often you bash the X-button by mistake, only to find that the player you wanted to control has suddenly lost his yellow dot (which denotes the player you're in charge of) to another. Of course, practice makes perfect but in the heat of the battle you can't always keep your head while those around you lose theirs.

There are three levels at which you can play: Pro, Semi-Pro and Beginner. The latter is best because you can pass to feet and gain some semblance of flowing football. Shooting is a bit hit and miss – repeated pressure to the circle-button gives you more power,



but it's a tough shout to slam in 25-yard howitzers. Often as not, you rely on the sheer incompetence of the goalkeepers – and, boy, can they bungle.

International and club teams are included (as are the usual leagues and cups), though the club data is over a year old – shame on you, Electronic Arts. If you're going to spend that much on acquiring a licence, you should at least ensure that Ravanelli has arrived at Teeside airport. And you can tell that the coders aren't from these climbs – players dismissed by the ref are 'ejected' as opposed to sent off. **There's also an indoor five-a-side game but this is pretty much farcical fare.** Half the time if you try to pass back from the kick-off, the ball ends up in the back of your own net – this happens in the 11-a-side fixtures, too.

Essentially what we have is an improvement on the original – superior in both looks and gameplay, and immaculately presented. Undoubtedly you can have a lot of fun with FIFA '97, but the nagging suspicion remains that EA still haven't got the really playable football game the licence demands. *Adidas Power Soccer* is more quirky and *Actua Soccer* is better by design. And all three ain't as good as *Sensible Soccer* – come on, Sensible, do us a faithful conversion of the Amiga original. We won't moan about the dearth of three dimensions and conspicuously-absent motion capture.



An Electronic Arts sports simulation wouldn't be complete without the requisite introductory sequence. A camera swoops through FIFA's Virtual Stadium™ before we're treated to a selection of the world's finest footballers, vision-mixed to death. It dribbles along just fine but, inevitably, you cut to the chase.



Alternatively...

<i>Actua Soccer</i>	8/10	PSM3
<i>Adidas Power Soccer</i>	8/10	PSM3
<i>Goal Storm</i>	8/10	PSM2
<i>FIFA '97</i>	7/10	PSM5

Official UK
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Magazine

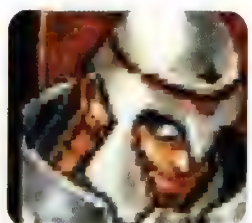
VERDICT

GRAPHICS:	Splendid 8	GAMEPLAY:	Still fiddly 6
SOUND:	Smart commentary 9	PRESENTATION:	Clinical 8
LIFESPAN:	Longer with chum 7	ORIGINALITY:	Another FIFA 3

Improved both in visual and gameplay terms, *FIFA '97* plays a reasonably decent, if rather fiddly, game of football. It's not quite there yet, though.

7
out of 10

You _____ Mathieu _____ Humphrey _____ Kwanda _____ Greameo _____ Viktor _____



Suikoden

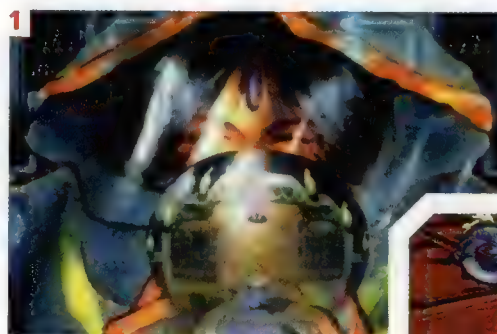
They might be the **best-selling genre** of console games in Japan, but **Western gamers** have had to wait sixteen months for the **first RPG** on the PlayStation. So was it worth the wait? Walk this way...

If you used to enjoy RPGs on the SNES then you might be pleased to discover that they haven't disappeared. They've just moved to the most happening console, and some of them – like *Suikoden* – haven't even bothered to swap their 16-bit apparel in the transition. But we're not going to lay into the graphics here: if that's your prime consideration then, rest assured, you probably aren't cut out for this mode of adventure gaming anyway.

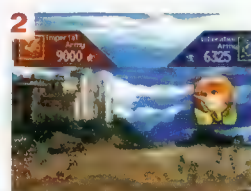
Connoisseurs might be worried by a rather different sensation of *déjà vu*, however. There's little enough originality in this field as it is, but *Suikoden* seems to have taken Capcom's *Breath Of Fire 2* on SNES as a template. The similarities are indeed suspicious.

Reworking the semi-historical Chinese legends that comprised that classic TV bamboofest *The Water Margin*, it's the tale of a downtrodden and over-taxed people rebelling against their corrupt oppressors. Initially a soldier of the Imperial Guard, the young upstart of a hero soon discovers that a conscience places him on the wrong side of the law. In his flight from cruel justice he assembles a band of thieves, mercenaries, and other low-life reprobates from every corner of the Empire – but is it enough to defeat an Emperor with seemingly magical powers? Aha...

One of the game's selling points is that there are

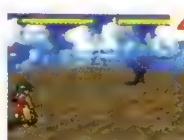


[1] The Lady Windy plans to take over a world that clearly lacks Deed Poll.
[2] With elves recruited, your army develops a formidable archery unit.
[3] Dragon bosses are *de rigueur*.



no less than 108 characters to be recruited, many of whom can also be taken fighting in your battle party. It's the discovery of ordinary citizens willing to aid the cause of the Liberation Army that proves most rewarding, however. If they accept your offer then they lend you their skills, thus equipping your castle HQ with shops, weaponsmiths, cooks, mages, gamblers, cartographers, even a couple of bizarre self-reverential types who let you play with hidden sound and graphics options. You're effectively building your own RPG town as you progress, and it's fun to check back on it now and again to see how the little people are settling in and doing business.

If you find many of them too easily, it's because the path of the narrative is about as linear as they come. Sometimes you'll be asked to make a choice,

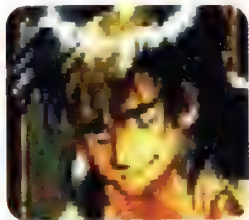
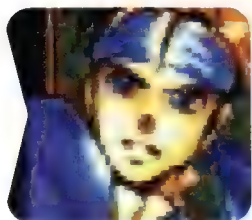


[1] Ah, the traditional village inn. **[2]** With a save point and this gambling sub-game, it's quids in. **[3]** Use Magic against a Charge. **[4]** A Sergio Leone-styled 'Duel'. **[5]** The Japanese love games of chance.



■ PUBLISHER:	Konami	■ DEVELOPER:	In-house
■ RELEASE DATE:	January '97	■ ORIGIN:	Japan
■ PRICE:	£44.99	■ STYLE:	Role-playing game

Flik Pahn Shidonia Jabba Kulon Minna



(1) This scene is plain suspect. (2) Stats! Pages of stats! (3) Not the scariest monsters ever conceived. (4) You can teleport anywhere - with a few witches recruited. (5) Shades of Python!

only to find that you have no choice at all: the dialogue loops with 'surely not?'-type interjections from other characters until you make the one correct decision needed for the game to progress. Elsewhere the menu system is clumsy and long-winded, always requiring one too many confirmations. Because each character has a limited inventory of items they can carry, going shopping for new armour and kitting them out in the best gear is a lengthy chore of swapping back and forth between options. It's a shame, because a more intelligent design could have overcome this.

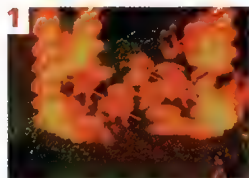
Although it partly retains its native title of *Genso*

One of the game's selling points

is that there are no less than 108 characters to be recruited, many of whom can be taken fighting in your battle party

Suikoden, the American-handled translation isn't as sensitive as we'd hoped. In fact, it's quite disgraceful. Typos and poor English proliferate, even to the extent of having 'bribe' misspelt as 'bride' on the game's most commonly used menu. You'll also encounter some incredibly camp exchanges that read as if a joke in the original text has been misinterpreted. The saddest thing is that you're probably quite used to this, and will suffer it willingly as we did.

Like all turn-based RPGs, at the heart of the game is a combat system of random enemy encounters. These can be tricky blighters to balance correctly at the best of times, but it's a real test of patience when you keep bumping into just one or two types of monster in the same predictable formations for the best part of ►



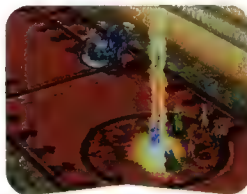
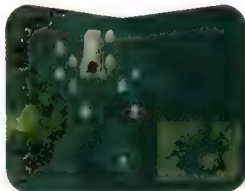
(1) One of your more impressive rune spells. Heh, heh, heh. (2) A rumour, eh? Hmm... (3) A limited inventory necessitates much item swappery. Bah.

Teach me, oh wise one



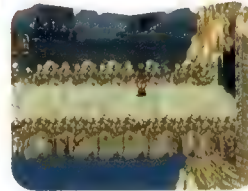
You control a character in the game's fantasy setting. Walk around town, buy some armour, listen to the citizens and follow the story to learn your next move.

Upon leaving town, you and your friends are represented on this 'map' of the world. Traverse the wilderness or navigate seas to reach your next stop.



Without warning, the screen changes to this. It means that you've randomly encountered a group of monsters and must defeat them.

Back to the map, and on your way. Monster battles happen with astounding regularity, so you have to enjoy the strategy of them to play this style of RPG.



Krinn

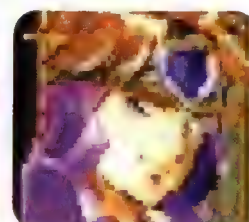
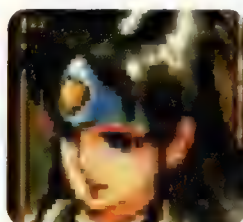
Sasuke

Kai

Lorelei

Jean

Cleo



[1] Consult Mathieu if you're stuck. [2] Battle backgrounds change according to your party's environment. This is a castle corridor. [3] You have little control over dialogue: exchanges are really cut-scenes to be discovered.



► an hour. Monsters tend to be very silly as well – bunnies with axes, holly bushes with little eyes and legs – so don't expect to be awed by visions of horror. It's only the ham-acted death scenes and an 'animated violence' tag that will earn any sort of teen-rating sticker on the game box.

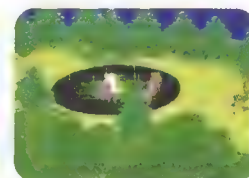
Experts will find themselves habitually clicking against pots and cupboards to look for hidden items, but try to overcome it. The game environment is disappointingly non-interactive, and the few secret treasures are easy to spot – yes, even though they've been cunningly hidden in large, gold treasure chests.

Ultimately, the difficulty grade is too low for hardcore fans and the system isn't as sophisticated as it might at first seem. Although there's the chance to build up and enhance all of those 108 characters, you don't need to use more than a few of them to see the end-sequence. Promising sections such as the duels and army battles prove to be trifling bonus diversions, and a disturbing lack of puzzles and plot conundrums means that you



Dragon scales

It does, too. Superficially isometric in appearance, the battle scenes are a blend of textured landscapes and 2D sprites that scale in and out according to the action. For a powerful group-blasting lightning storm, the camera moves away. Score a critical hit and the view zooms in close to show your animated fellows giving it 'some' with their mighty blades of justice. A small saving grace, in our eyes, that adds some much-needed movement.



can pretty much walk through the whole affair without pause for head-scratching.

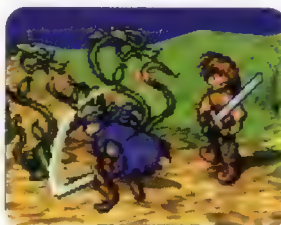
'Yes, but did you enjoy it?' Sigh. It's true. For all its shortcomings, its frustrations, its cheaply shallow plot twists, we stuck with it while day turned to night and back again. And perhaps you've been there too, guiltily persevering with a game that you suspect didn't deserve it. You see, despite its many flaws, *Suikoden* is still worthy of recommendation. This style of adventuring is an acquired taste verging on addiction, and *Suki* presents a very playable and distracting stop-gap until the more promising *Breath Of Fire 3* from Capcom and Square's *Final Fantasy VII* are allowed to grace our European consoles in PAL form.

One more thing. If you're a long-standing RPG-head then you might cynically assume we've given this a seven because 'yeah, that's what these games always score in console mags'. Not PSM, matey. We know our stuff, we've played it heavily and, on the grand scale of roleplaying, *Suikoden* is awarded such a mark for being good but not great. But we'd like to give full marks to Konami UK, nevertheless, for responding to the RPG needs of us choice-deprived pointy-hats. More, please.



Three steps to heaven

Killing things is, typically, the source of all amusement in *Suikoden*. Party battles are decided as much by your team line-up and their possible combination attacks as by your actual mid-fight strategies. The simple folk you've recruited to the Liberation suddenly reveal new traits in the basic but cutely amusing Army battles. Duel, on the other hand, is Scissors, Paper, Stone writ large.



Alternatively...

To date *Suikoden* is the only turn-based RPG to appear on the UK PlayStation!

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS: Desperately unambitious 4

■ GAMEPLAY:

Menu-mania 7

Not the finest exponent of its genre, but *Suikoden* comes highly recommended to those who miss their fix of hit points and melodramatic plots.

■ SOUND:

CD-streamed pleasantries 6

■ PRESENTATION:

16-bit 5

■ LIFESPAN:

25-40 hours 6

■ ORIGINALITY:

Here, yes 5

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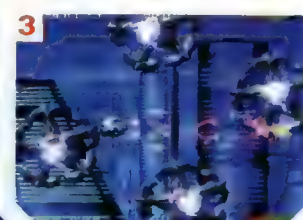
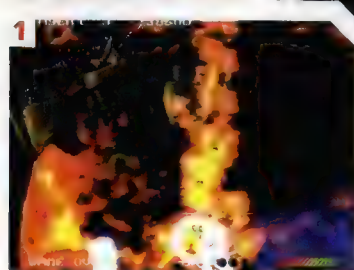
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(1) Death comes often, though it's an explosive affair taking out a screen-full of aliens every time. (2) One of the latter-stage bosses takes an age to kill. (3) Staying in the middle of this lot makes sense. (4) The crook formation.



Project X2

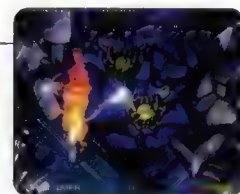
Flash back to the days when the **Amiga** was games machine supreme, or fitting use of 32-bit technology? Team 17's new *Project* is, quite literally, a **blast** from the past

Earth doesn't have it easy; not only do we have our own home-grown troubles – global warming and all that – but there are those pesky alien invaders that turn up every four or five years, from which only a lone fighter pilot, kitted out with the latest inter-stellar vehicle of his choice, can save us. Or such is the world according to Team 17, the northern bunch who made Amiga owners of the early '90s very happy indeed when they bashed out a shooter entitled *Project X*.

Now all of us already-smiling PlayStation owners have a similarly entitled game to dig our gnashers into. The style of gaming is identical to the Amiga version:

it's you against a myriad of moving sprites, lasers a'lasering, plasma guns a'plasmering, and missiles generally doing their stuff. You need expert eye-to-hand co-ordination to progress past the first stage – and the patience of a man who enjoys building life-size matchstick replicas of churches to stay sane after being annihilated by an end-of-level boss for the twenty-third time in an hour and a half. It's a shoot 'em up, and a particularly unashamed one at that; you move about and shoot things, with the number of things and the amount of damage they can take increasing as you progress throughout the game.

For those of you familiar with the original *Project*



Weapons of mass destruction

Of course, the variety of the weapons available to you has a huge effect on how you're going to feel about any shoot 'em up. In keeping with the style of gameplay, *Project X2* offers nothing particularly original, but every weapon and power-up in the game is pretty good at killing stuff. For instance...



As with all of *X2*'s weapons, the laser gun can be upgraded, but it's fairly weak.



Major-league destruction, courtesy of the plasma gun, a hang-over from the original.



It's an intermittent means of killing stuff, but a highly effective one at that.



Only available late in the game, the dancing lightning bolt is extremely nasty.



■ PUBLISHER: Ocean ■ DEVELOPER: Team 17
 ■ RELEASE DATE: Out now ■ ORIGIN: UK
 ■ PRICE: £44.99 ■ STYLE: 2D shoot 'em up

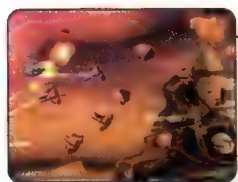


(1) There's a fair amount of vertical blasting to be done. (2) The asteroid field is similar to that in *Project X* on the Amiga. (3) Some of the larger ships take forever to destroy. (4) But they go with a bang. (5) Even early bosses are tough. (6) Strange appendages attack from below. (7) More frenzied firing.

Project X2 is the best shoot 'em up

of its type on the PlayStation at present, but

it's a hardly a milepost in game design.



X, the graphical style will also look remarkably familiar – **it's colourful without being garish, and slick in the extreme.** The huge amount of colours used in X2 certainly adds to the overall effect, and the fact that there's no slow-down, even when the sprites on screen number into their dozens, indicates that the PlayStation's graphical abilities are being exploited to the full. But in comparison with many of the platform's 3D games, this isn't an obvious leap forward from the Amiga title.

Which matters little, for *Project X2* is an accomplished example of a shoot 'em up. The difficulty curve is pitched so that the game really stretches your ability. That said, the fact that there's a Continue available in each game, and that the game starts at the level after the one you last completed (up until the sixth level), with a password-restart system for when you turn the machine off, makes progress a little too fast. This minimises any initial frustration at a lack of progress, but ultimately restricts the game's longevity and value.



The sonic extravagances of *Project X* are equally abundant in the sequel, though the pumping rave soundtrack is somewhat less original than it was half a decade ago. But BIG explosions and the obligatory digitised speech throughout are impressive, as is the rather lengthy animated intro sequence.

The levels themselves take you on a journey that includes planetary surfaces, asteroid fields, internal structures and an ice world which poses some particularly troublesome problems. The mix of hazards is good, each level bringing in its own collection of challenges and enemy type, though in some instances the enemies seem to be present just to make life hard for the player rather than for any 'logical' reason.

Project X2 is the best shoot 'em up of its type on the PlayStation at present, but it's hardly a milepost in game design. It's very similar to the Amiga original, and this style of game has been done several dozens of times previous on other platforms. Its appeal is limited; it's all about moving about quickly, really. But still, it's mighty pretty and it sounds good. It's a tad short, arguably, but you've got a 'hard' setting to have a crack at, and there are three ship types to fly. No 'must buy', but a worthy title, and a superb shoot 'em up in comparison with the other 2D offerings on the PlayStation.



Alternatively...

<i>Project X2</i>	7/10	PSM5
<i>Raiden</i>	7/10	PSM2
<i>Phosphor</i>	5/10	PSM4
<i>Revolution X</i>	2/10	PSM6

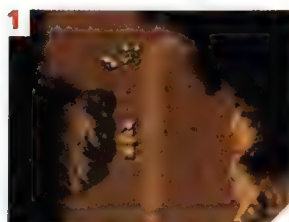
VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS: Souped-up Amiga **7** ■ GAMEPLAY: Aged **5**
 ■ SOUND: Big, brash and LOUD! **8** ■ PRESENTATION: Dressed-up mutton **9**
 ■ LIFESPAN: When your thumb wears out **6** ■ ORIGINALITY: Lots, in 1990 **2**

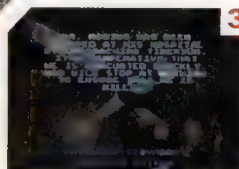
Official UK
PlayStation
 Magazine **15**

Project X2 has been seen before by us all, but it's still a game worthy of loading up when you've got time to kill – or a lot of pent-up aggression.

7
 out of 10



(1) A scouting Humm-Vee runs into a two-tank ambush. **(2)** A daring prison breakout in progress - take out the towers and storm the cells. **(3)** No filmic briefings for the new Sony missions, just crystal-clear textual instructions. **(4)** The first steps in this mission are to repair the barracks, then build up a new base **(5)** NOD soldiers executing civilians.



Command & Conquer

Tool up your troops with guns, big guns and even bigger guns
as the PlayStation gets treated to another PC classic



Command. Conquer. Separately, they're just words. Words with little in common except that they both begin with the letter 'C'. But put them together and you've a deadly combination. *Command & Conquer*. The definitive action/strategy game, an utterly compelling blend of brains and bloodlust that'll have you glued to the screen for hours on end, murmuring again and again, 'Just one more mission... just one more...'

After its record-breaking success on the PC, a PlayStation version of the game was sure to follow.

And, understandably, developers Westwood Studios have decided not to tamper with a winning formula, making console *Command & Conquer* as faithful a reproduction of the original hit as possible. Which is brilliant news for anyone who's had to put up with their PC-owning friends gibbering on about how great it is. Now we can all share in the many delights of a game with the highest body count ever recorded.

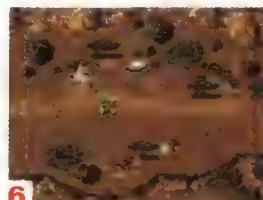
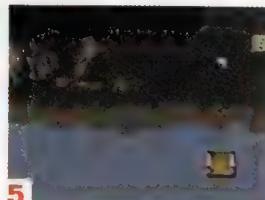
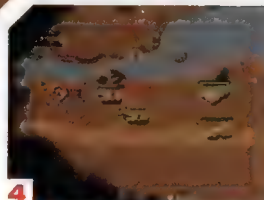
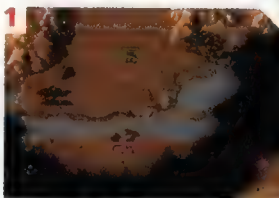
Many, many people die in this game. An entire platoon of scouts is incinerated by one well-placed jet from a Flame tank. Unarmed engineers are mown down by the rear-mounted machine guns of Ranger jeeps. A shoulder-mounted rocket launcher blows apart a pair of inattentive guards. An entrenched line of defenders are squished by an unstoppable Mammoth tank. So, faced with scenes of such appalling carnage, there's only one place to be: 20 miles back, sending cannon fodder to certain death from the safety of a high-tech command bunker.

Command & Conquer puts you in complete control of one side in a series of vicious battles, the outcome of which will affect the fate of the entire human race. Will the chummily democratic Global Defence Initiative win the day? Or the morality-free Brotherhood of Nod? Only you, and the skill with which you direct your troops across the battlefields, can decide.

Because one of the greatest features of the game is the way you can favour each faction equally. There are no 'goodies' or 'baddies' here; everyone is merely a bit player in the all-consuming act of war. *C&C* comes on two CDs; one for GDI, the other for NOD. And once you've finished the game from one point of view, you



The sheer visceral power of the game,
coupled with its subtlety and fearsome
level of difficulty make for
a breathtaking gameplay experience



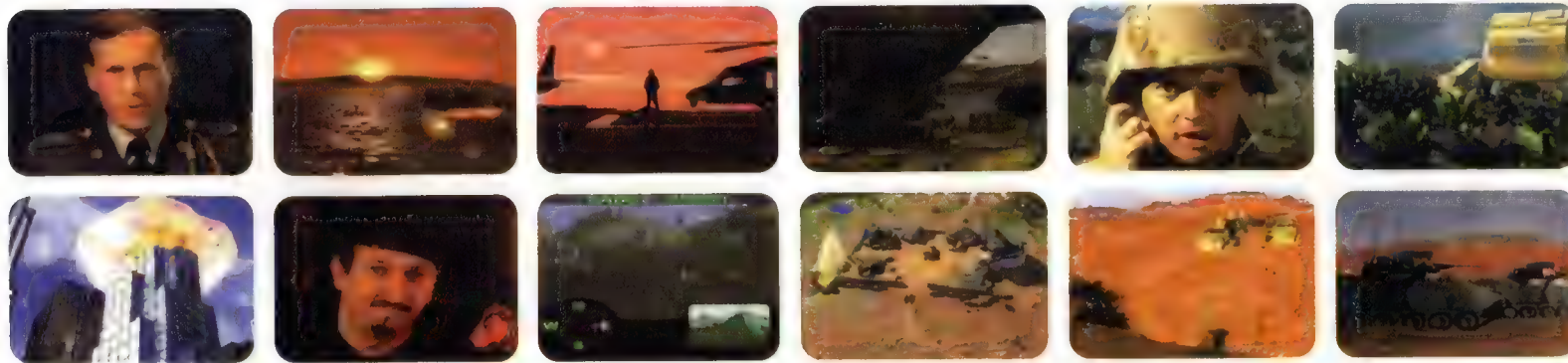
(1) The GDI long-range rocket launcher in full effect. **(2)** A well-protected harvester gathers ore. **(3)** A lone tank can't defend against such a concerted attack. **(4)** Heavy tanks squish hapless infantry. **(5)** Landing troops to form a beachhead. **(6)** A commando sneaks past the destruction of a village. **(7)** They don't stand a chance!



■ PUBLISHER:	Virgin	■ DEVELOPER:	Westwood Studios
■ RELEASE DATE:	Out now	■ ORIGIN:	United States
■ PRICE:	£44.99	■ STYLE:	Strategy/Action

Setting the scene

Command & Conquer's stunning gameplay is, delightfully, complemented by tons of equally outstanding presentational touches. Mission briefings feature filmed actors, but there are action-packed rendered animations aplenty, too, which add up to create a brilliantly dynamic and convincing atmosphere.

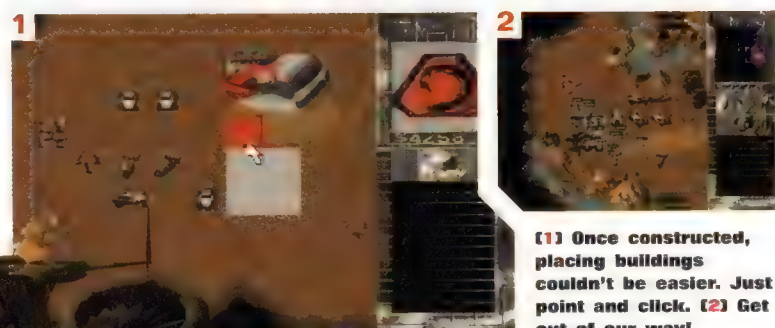


can play again from the other. Each has different units and responds best to different tactics. The Brotherhood use assault cycles. Stealth tanks and flame-thrower troops like to get in quick and act brutal, while the GDI's long-range rocket launchers, lumbering Mammoth tanks and superior airborne capabilities favour a more arm's-length approach to combat.

■ Whichever side you're playing, though, you'll have to work through just under 50 different missions of increasing complexity. Very early levels will be completed in 10 or 20 minutes, but you'll soon find yourself taking at least an hour over some of the more convoluted challenges. The first 18 or so on each side reproduce those in the original PC game, and develop a coherent storyline with some hugely impressive film sequences. Then you've got to deal with the entire contents of the 'Covert Ops' expansion pack, a collection of depressingly tough levels to push your skills to the limit. And, brilliantly, Sony have created their own half-dozen scenarios, especially for the PlayStation, to offer an even longer-lasting challenge and superb value for money.

So how do you actually go about commanding and conquering, then? Well, the principles are very simple, even though things quickly get extremely complicated as the game develops, more units become available to you, and more complex objectives are set.

After a video briefing, you'll begin each level with a number of troops and vehicles, usually too with a ready-made (but occasionally derelict) base, or a Mobile Construction Vehicle able to set up shop wherever you desire. You'll need to build power stations to keep the



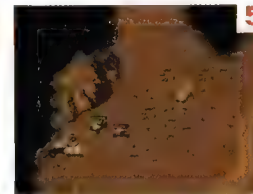
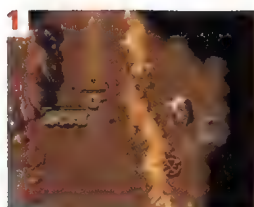
(1) Once constructed, placing buildings couldn't be easier. Just point and click. **(2)** Get out of our way!



homestead operational, then begin to mine the surrounding area for hyper-valuable Tiberium ore. Once processed in a refinery, this mutant growth yields cash, enabling you to develop your base further or to build new units once you've constructed the relevant facilities.

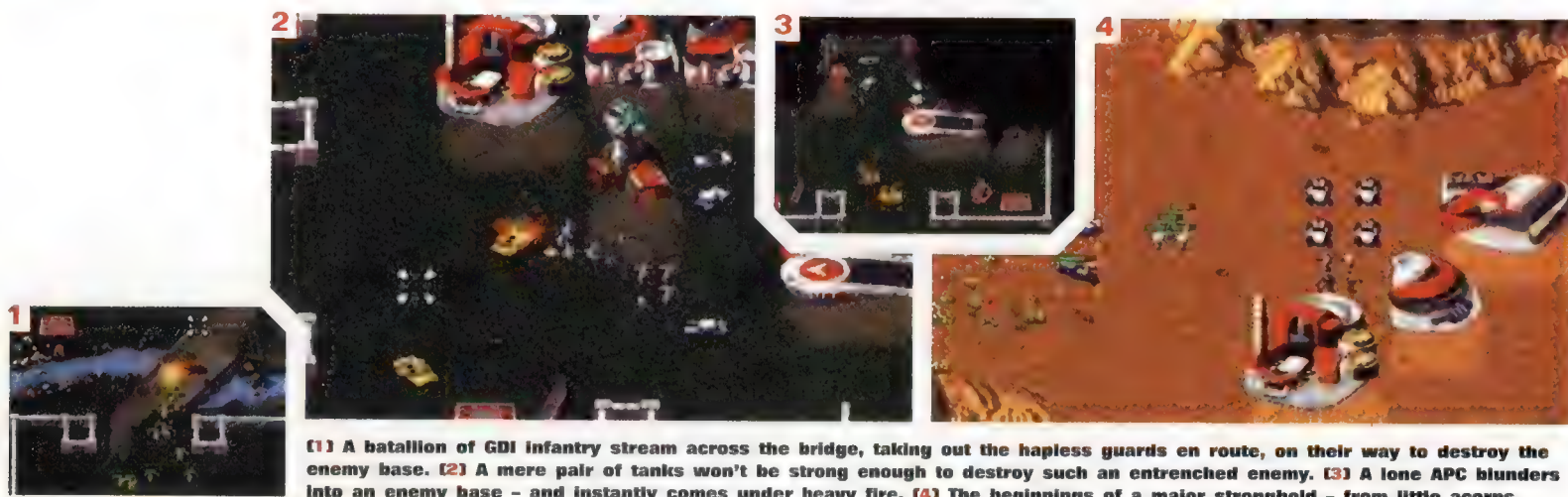
All the time, your opponent will be going about their own business, too, massing their forces for attack or strengthening their defences, depending on the mission scenario. All activity is a balancing act between time and money; risk and reward. The outcome of a level could be decided by one overwhelming assault on an enemy base, or by a series of small-scale skirmishes, or persistent starvation of resources, or even the actions of a lone commando or engineer.

So far, so brilliant. There's nothing here to stretch ►



(1) Pounding a laser tower, one of the deadliest defensive units. **(2)** Even the best-constructed base can't survive a properly co-ordinated onslaught. **(3)** You'll be treated to an in-depth analysis of your performance after every mission. **(4)** A couple of platoons flush out snipers from the trees. **(5)** Buggies harass an enemy harvester. **(6)** A NOD base goes under. **(7)** Soon all this will be under your control! **(8)** Would you look at that!





(1) A battalion of GDI infantry stream across the bridge, taking out the hapless guards en route, on their way to destroy the enemy base. (2) A mere pair of tanks won't be strong enough to destroy such an entrenched enemy. (3) A lone APC blunders into an enemy base - and instantly comes under heavy fire. (4) The beginnings of a major stronghold - from little acorns...

There are no 'goodies' or 'baddies'

here; everyone is merely a bit player in the all-consuming act of war

► the PlayStation technically, of course; the game certainly looks unspectacular, without a single textured polygon to be seen. But the sheer visceral power of the game, coupled with its ever-developing subtlety and fearsome level of difficulty, make for a breathtaking gameplay experience. The blend of action and strategy is perfectly judged; although you need to plan every move carefully, the ability to think fast in a fight is infinitely more important than any detailed cost/benefit analysis. And even though many levels build up slowly, there's always sufficient action to keep the pulse racing.

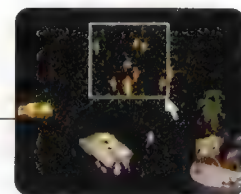
But sadly there are also a couple of problems. The accuracy of the conversion from the PC game turns out to be a curse as well as a blessing. It's crushingly disappointing, for example, to find a title which was so obviously designed to be played with a mouse fail to support the Sony peripheral.

Scrolling and selecting can only be done via the joypad, and although this works satisfactorily for the most part, it's undeniably clumsy.

The pointer also scrolls frustratingly slowly. Some of the maps can get very large, and if an attack is launched on your base while you're engaged in a forward attack on the other side of the field, it can all be over by the time you manage to scroll across. This problem is compounded by the fact that, with no variable speed control, Playstation C&C plays significantly faster than the finely-tuned PC version. **Troops rush around at breakneck speed, making everything much more action-packed**, but at the same time occasionally upsetting the delicate action/strategy balance with some uncontrollably manic encounters.

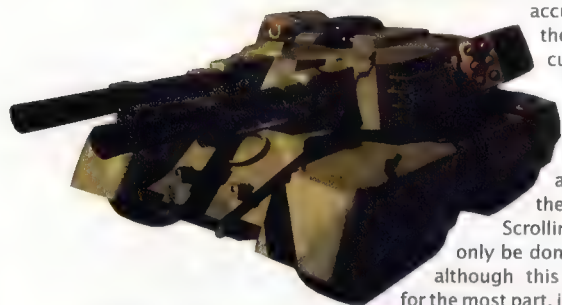
Oh, and there's no multi-player link-up support, despite the fact that inflicting a devastating C&C defeat on a close friend has always been one of the most satisfying pleasures the world has to offer.

If the game itself wasn't so undeniably superb and engrossingly enjoyable to play, these omissions and niggles would have threatened to overwhelm it. But the glittering brilliance of *Command & Conquer* shines through. It's just got so much to offer: playing it is one long voyage of discovery as it reveals a new feature and unfolds a new level of depth, with every successive mission. It's a genre-defining classic. The Playstation version may not be perfect, but it's still not too far off.



Alternatively...

<i>Command & Conquer</i>	8/10	PSM15
<i>Warhammer</i>	8/10	PSM12
<i>X-COM: Enemy Unknown</i>	8/10	PSM1
<i>X-COM: TFTD</i>	8/10	PSM14
<i>Return Fire</i>	7/10	PSM10



(1) Re-group teams with a quick button combo. (2) First-wave troops crawl sneakily. (3) Making short work of a SAM site. (4) Bases get ever more homely.



VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:

Functional 6

■ GAMEPLAY:

Frankly addictive 9

■ SOUND:

Cute vocal samples 7

■ PRESENTATION:

Superb film bits 9

■ LIFESPAN:

Oodles of missions 8

■ ORIGINALITY:

An old PC game 5

Even though it clearly wasn't designed for the Playstation, this is still a spectacularly enjoyable game offering a compelling and long-lasting challenge.

9
out of 10

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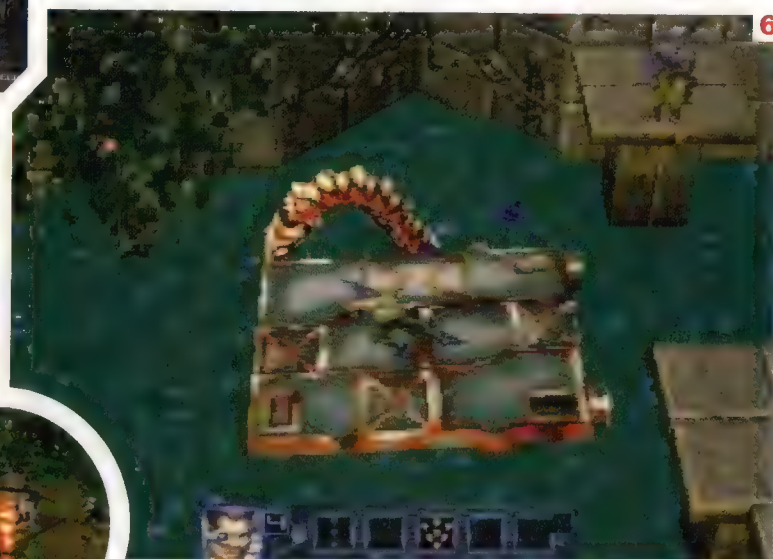
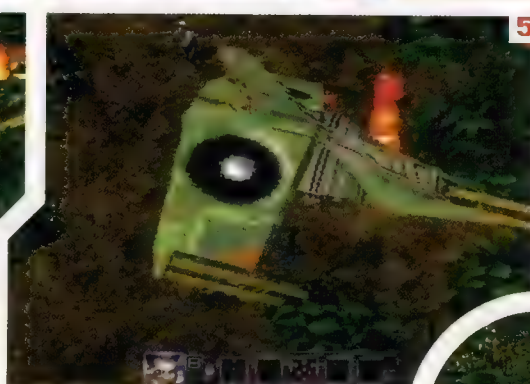
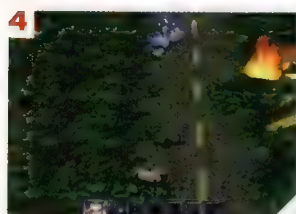
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Contra: Legacy Of War

Old-time computer gamers may feel a **twinge of nostalgia** when they see this version of a **classic SNES game** but the past **isn't all it's cracked up to be**. PSM might have **expected rather more** from Konami's re-make



(1) If you're stuck on the raft when the sea monster lays its eggs, you're in big trouble. **(2)** Choosing your character should make a big difference to the way the game plays, but it doesn't. **(3)** You'll see a lot of this screen. **(4)** See that little bluebird? Grab it. **(5)** There are some interesting features, but they don't do enough. **(6)** Uh oh. More trouble.



Contra on the SNES was quite popular in its day, but Appaloosa's version is no big-budget up-grade – Konami have farmed this one out on the cheap and it shows.

The first impression you get is that there is too much too shoot at – you can't think about what you're doing or plan any strategy because you're constantly being attacked from all sides. **All you can do is get on your belly and fire indiscriminately and anything that moves and**, if you find a spare second, at anything else, just in case there's a secret door there. But you soon see that this can't be the way through and you learn what you need to destroy and what's best avoiding – many obstacles can simply be by-passed by following a particular course. This makes them redundant and you wonder why they're there in the first place, but you don't want to get involved in any unnecessary fights as you'll need all the health you can keep to get you through the level.

The second, and more lasting, impression is that this is a very frustrating game. Each level is extremely difficult and satisfaction is to be gained only by working out the exact route through, eventually completing it, saving it and moving on. It's also an annoying game because you can't go back on yourself – once you've

moved forward on the screen, there's no return, your character just runs on the spot up against the screen border. This is necessary for two-player gameplay but it's a shame that it's also the way the one-player game works. Furthermore, in keeping with many low-budget games, you can only face in one of eight discreet directions. This is a pain because it means that you have to get into contrived positions to shoot at targets or avoid incoming fire.

And your range of view is too short. Objects off-screen only become visible once they come into range. So you have to play the level a few times to know where things are and how to shoot at them before you they come into sight. There's no excuse for this failing. The play area is simply not big enough.

Unfortunately most of the appeal

of this game lies in its difficulty and

so you'll need to reload

a lot of times to advance

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:

Adequate **4**

■ GAMEPLAY:

Frustrating **3**

■ SOUND:

Bang Bang **3**

■ PRESENTATION:

Cheap **4**

■ LIFESPAN:

Far too long **6**

■ ORIGINALITY:

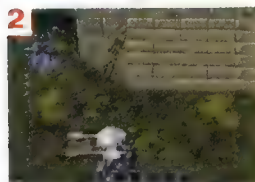
Yeah, right **2**

This game is only fun if you like watching your machine load games. Its only real appeal is that it's far too hard to finish quickly. A distinct disappointment.

4

out of 10

■ PUBLISHER: Konami ■ DEVELOPER: Appaloosa
 ■ RELEASE DATE: February '97 ■ ORIGIN: United States
 ■ PRICE: £44.99 ■ STYLE: Shoot 'em up



(1) That's my boat. **(2)** The best thing to do against these massive robot guns is to get up behind them and blast them repeatedly in the back. Show no mercy. **(3)** Darn! That nasty oil-rig type robot thingy has killed me, again.



On the plus side, you do get some interesting weaponry, and this varies according to the character you play. But while you're led to believe that each character is quite distinct, they all play the same apart from the different guns they've got. **You're told that CD-288 can function underwater, but take him for a swim and he behaves like a pussycat, shivering and losing health just from getting his toes wet.**

Unfortunately most of the appeal of this game lies in its difficulty and so you'll need to reload many times to advance. Given PlayStation loading times, this means you'll spend more time reloading games than playing, which requires lots of patience and is hardly the idea.

If you take unexpected damage early on, or miss a goodie you're supposed to pick up, that run becomes void, as you'll never make it through with that damage on board or without your bonuses. You can check out options and look for secret doors, but you're only killing time before the next reload. And once you have solved them, you'll have no desire to go back and replay levels.

The logical extension of this is that by the time you've completed the entire game, you'll have seen quite enough of it. To be honest, your scribe reached this stage some time before then, which probably means that the best guns and enemies were missed out on, but they doubtless weren't all that great anyway.



Alternatively...

Steel Harbinger	8/10	PSM13
In The Hunt	5/10	PSM7
Loose Soldier	8/10	PSM3
Phibesoma	5/10	PSM4
Contra: Legacy Of War	4/10	PSM15



(1) Level 1, and it's all far too hectic already. Shoot the guns out before blasting down the door. **(2)** Big Ray's new three-bullet gun. Big wow.



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In the days before rendered introductory sequences, there was *Pac-Man*.



One wonders whether *Pac-Man* will return for a 3D, 32-bit adventure.

Namco Museum Volume 3

Enter the Tardis, once again, as we return to the days
when **Austin Ambassadors** roamed the highways and
Benny, from *Crossroads*, opened supermarkets

Let us be perfectly candid and quite frank, for a moment. A lot of the games on these *Namco Museum* collections are terrible. Most gamers will spend no more than five minutes playing them. In fact, for some of them, the only value is that of novelty and, moreover, nostalgia. Merely the sound of some of these games conjures up memories of lost youth, of hanging around arcades, pockets weighed down with five and 10 pence pieces. And it's not that the games are old – which they are, in terms of videogames history – it's just that many of them are

The best is the earliest example:

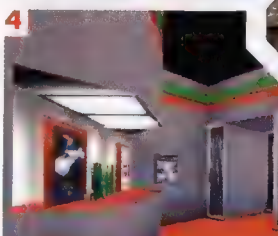
Galaxian remains a victory for common sense, a shooter to grace any machine

extremely poor. A good game is a good game, be it sober of sprite or seductively draped in polygons.

The *Namco Museum* compilations tread no discernible pattern. The first selection included shoot 'em up *Galaga*, yet the third features the prequel *Galaxian*, while *Volume 2* entertained *Caplus*, the sequel to *Galaga*. The format is the same as the first two fellows. You enter Namco's virtual museum, nod at the curator, then shuffle from room to room and gaze respectfully at the objects therein, batting the X-button now and again to take a closer look the historical videogame artifacts from days of yore.

Or you might just jog straight to the games themselves. Again, as with *Volume 1* and *2*, this is a mixed bag, the games spread between the years 1979-1983. And the best is the earliest example: *Galaxian* remains a victory for common sense, a shooter to grace any machine. When we previewed the game last month, we checked out the Japanese NTSC version and, truth be told, it runs rather faster than the PAL incarnation. Probably the other highlight of the collection is *MS Pac-Man* and *Phozon* is an interesting oddity. Whether you can justify spending £40 for a 17-year-old shoot 'em up is a matter of personal conscience. The likelihood is, only the hardened buff or nostalgia freak will be tempted by this collection.

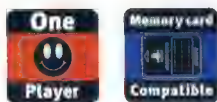
(1) We're not just here for the games, you know. This is an educational trip, a journey through times past. Nod to the curator and in you go... (2) Lady MS Pac-Man's room. (3) Walk in front of the pictures and they reveal extra info. (4) *Pole Position II*. (5) Time to buy the tea-towel, then.



Alternatively...

<i>Namco Museum Volume 1</i>	7/10	PSM5
<i>Williams Arcade's Gr. Hits</i>	7/10	PSM7
<i>Namco Museum Volume 2</i>	8/10	PSM14
<i>Namco Museum Volume 3</i>	8/10	PSM15





PUBLISHER: SCEE DEVELOPER: Namco
 RELEASE DATE: December ORIGIN: Japan
 PRICE: £39.99 STYLE: Classic coin-op compilation

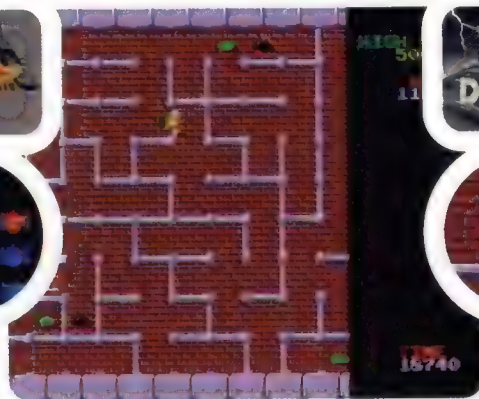
A compendium of coin-op classics

The third volume of ageing Namco coin-ops contains the good, bad and indifferent. *Galaxians* is top boy closely followed by *MS Pac-Man* and *Phozon*. As for the rest of the gang...



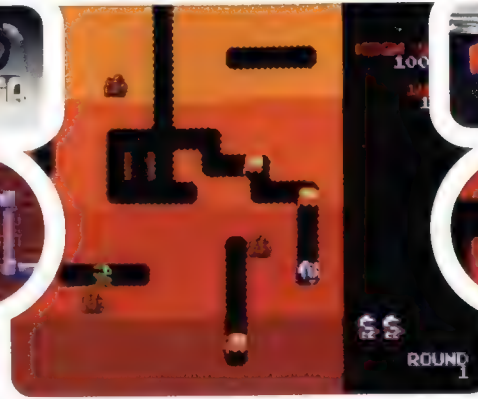
Galaxian

This remains one of the most addictive games on the manor and it's probably the 'most-played' game in PSM's office. Essentially, it's that one step forward from *Space Invaders*, the foe swooping from the skies laden with bullets. You sit, stoically, at the bottom of the screen, shifting left and right to pick them off. As you clean the sheets, so the more active our friends from the skies become. Quite remarkable, despite performing slower than on the Japanese NTSC version.



The Tower of Druaga

The youngest fellow in the collection, *The Tower of Druaga* is a medieval romp through a maze. You take on the role of a knight who has to skirt past a barrel of nasties to retrieve a key before negotiating a safe passage to the exit. Some of the baddies can be put to the sword, others must simply be steered past if you're to wend safely home. It's terribly slow and one cannot imagine many will persevere long with it. *Druaga* also made a successful journey on to the NES.



Dig Dug

Members of the office suggest that *Dig Dug* was a big hit, although your scribe has no memory of it - obviously not enough time spent trawling arcades in the early '80s. From the title, you'll gather that some form of excavation is involved. You tunnel beneath the ground, avoiding rocks and various heinous baddies. As you burrow, so the passageways open up and the easier it is to get killed. You can bounce fireballs and topple apples on to the enemy, but you probably won't for long.



Pole Position II

When this first appeared, the reaction was probably pretty similar to the one which Psygnosis' *Formula 1* received more recently - bugs notwithstanding, of course. Back in '83, sliced bread had nothing on *Pole Position* and, by Jimminy, it must have looked realistic back then. Yet after a few seconds of playing it now, you baulk at the car's alarming tendency to explode at the merest suggestion of a collision. And the steering is ridiculously light. Old, and not much fun.



Phozon

The most unusual example in the collection, *Phozon* ensured that one afternoon, two members of the team did little else other than suss out how to replicate atomic shapes by collecting pieces which float across the screen. Eh? Look, there's a shape in the centre of the screen and you copy it by affixing your mass to theirs as it happens by while avoiding the attentions of deadly atoms. When you're successful, so the shape becomes more complex. An excellent curio.



MS Pac-Man

Wakka, wakka, wakka. *Pac-Man* is undoubtedly one of THE classic coin-ops. *MS Pac-Man* (she's a little lady - the MS bit) retains the charm of the original, only there's a couple more ideas in here, as well as added colour. Steer a safe passage through the maze, your object being to eat all the pills. The enemy trails menacingly, but eat the special power pills and you can now devour foe, for a limited period only. Love or hate it, *Pac-Man* still works.

VERDICT

GRAPHICS: Come off it 1 GAMEPLAY: Testing 5
 SOUND: Familiar bleeps 5 PRESENTATION: Neat museum 7
 LIFESPAN: Supposedly 6 ORIGINALITY: Not now, of course 3

Official UK
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Galaxian, Phozon and *MS Pac-Man* are the highlights of this compilation - but the appeal remains only for true fanatics and nostalgia freaks.

6
out of 10

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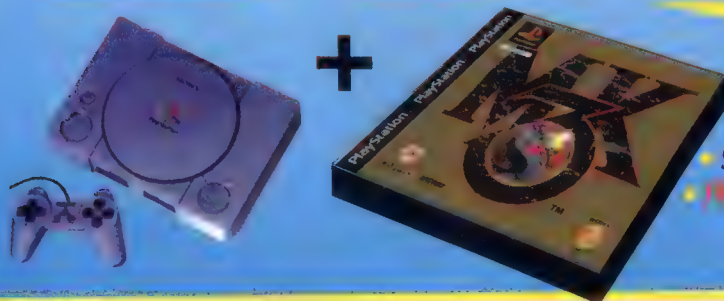
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[1] A full complement of international teams are available for selection. You're bound to find a favourite. **[2]** The accent is on action, here, with net-busting, hot-shot goals occurring every couple of minutes. **[3]** The keepers can be a bit daft at times. Feign a shot, get them to dive, then hammer it!



International Superstar Soccer Deluxe

On your way to buy a 3D footie game? Hold it right there. We demand you check out *ISSD* first. No, don't laugh. Read this instead...

In the face of the competition *ISS Deluxe* looks way out of its depth. There are so many excellent football games bending shelves already, the last thing we need is another one. Even its name is cheesy. Not just *International Superstar Soccer*, but *ISS 'Deluxe'*, if you will. These days, football games have motion-captured polygonal players and highly complex player AI. The public demand nothing less. David Ginola sports sticky balls on his naked torso and jumps around to aid FIFA '97. Sinton and Woods kissed matting for *Actua Soccer*.

C'mon then, you 'n' your mates!

ISSD usefully supports the Sony Multi-Tap. Four players may compete or co-operate in any permutation of two teams, four players and a CPU that you can possibly imagine. If you have the means, we suggest you try it. It's great.



[1] Plug in a Multi-Tap and four joypads appear on the set-up screen instead of two. **[2]** You can all play for the same side, or two on two or... well anything really. It's great fun.

Playing *ISSD* 'feels good'. Everything 'works'...

Beneath the simple controls lie myriad possibilities and all of them work and are easily performed



Huge teams of hugely talented programmers toil hugely to create huge PlayStation hits. And yet they've all missed the point, rather. You don't play football games to see how 'real' the players behave or to analyse the correctness of the statistics of one player over another. You play football games to have fun. And *ISSD* is FUN.

Look at these screenshots. Let's not beat about the bush. *ISSD* looks terrible. Dated. Floundering on the sea of graphical ineptitude, its tiny, ill-formed sprite-head barely above the waves. But let's

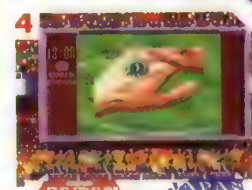
not forget why we're here – to have fun. And this is where *ISSD* has found its, albeit tiny, niche.

ISSD could be the product of some intolerably clever retro-marketing policy (make games that look old so that all the 16-bit sponges get off on some sort of nostalgia vibe) but the real reason that *ISSD* looks so decrepit is because it *is*. This is a conversion of the best 16-bit football game there was (and still is). They sold truckloads of the things, so what could be more obvious than a 32-bit conversion of such a hit?

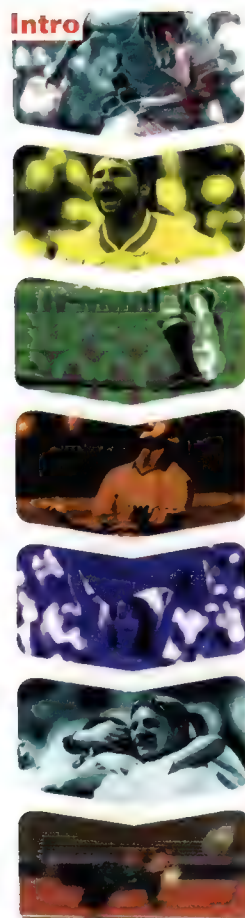
It's unfortunate, therefore, that Konami have done nix, nought and nowt to utilise your PlayStation's extra power to further the *ISSD* experience. Well, that's not exactly true – there is an all-new, pulled-off-the-CD commentary and when you score a goal, or have a free



PUBLISHER:	Konami	DEVELOPER:	In-house
RELEASE DATE:	January '97	ORIGIN:	Japan
PRICE:	£44.99	STYLE:	Arcade football sim



- (1) If you're playing against a less able opponent, you can boost or impede a team's performance. (2) Penalty kicks are tense affairs. (3) Well-played, keeper! (4) Look at that hand! It's crap! (5) Polygonal letters spiral around during play.



kick, some whizzy polygonal letters fly about, spelling the words 'Corner' or 'Free Kick' as appropriate. And that's it really. All the international 'superstars' are here as before, with their names changed ever so slightly and their sprites given an approximation of their haircuts. All the old tournament and league modes are preserved too. There may be a hundred more subtle changes present, but to this reviewer (and to many fellow players) it is identical to its crusty 16-bit predecessors. Even the lumpy sprite hand that shows you the result of the kick-off coin toss is the same. Absolutely criminal, isn't it?

The amazing thing is that *ISSD* is better than *FIFA '97*, *Olympic Soccer*, Konami's own *Goal Storm*, *Striker*, and is up there jostling with *Adidas Power Soccer* and *Actua Soccer* for your cash. How? Well, it all comes down to that magical quantity known as 'gameplay'. This over-used word describes that elusive quality of a game that makes it 'good to do'. Playing *ISSD* 'feels good'. Everything 'works'. Everything's 'right'. Beneath the simple controls lie myriad possibilities and, in a bit of a coup, all of them work and are easily learnt and performed during a game. Passes may be short,

across-the-ground affairs or long, high lobbs via a choice of button presses. Corners may be lofted curve balls, passes to players, or highly ambitious attempts at goal. And shots can be aimed at one of eight goal positions via simultaneous D-pad and shoot-button presses. It's all so easy. Someone really ought to tell the creators of *FIFA* that it's no good being given the option of performing hundreds of different moves if you can't actually get your player to do any of them.

There are flaws, of course. There is only one view of the pitch (ridiculous, eh?) which, though perfectly adequate, will occasionally have your little spritey chap getting lost in the middle of the pitch. The Japanese-bloke-trying-to-sound-English commentator is far more hilarious than he is accurate, and finally there's the fact that this looks and plays exactly like the original 16-bit game. And that can never be right can it?

Thing is, *ISSD* is an absolutely classic game. We greeted this PlayStation version with all the affection we'd lavish upon a presumed-dead relative. It is fantastic fun and since it arrived, *FIFA '97* just hasn't had a look in. Got the message?



Healthy options

Compulsive fiddlers will be delighted by *ISSD*'s umpteen options and modes.



- (1) Position your players in any one of a whole host of formations. (2) Your players can be assigned to mark one of the other side if they're a bit too tasty. (3) Take your pick from leagues, cup, one-offs or custom tournaments. (4) Play a knockout mini tournament... (5) ...against your mates or the CPU.

VERDICT

GRAPHICS:	Competent but dated 5	GAMEPLAY:	Fantastic 9
SOUND:	Hilarious Japlish commentary 8	PRESENTATION:	A little messy 6
LIFESPAN:	A classic repeater 8	ORIGINALITY:	In a football game? 5

Alternatively...

<i>ISS Deluxe</i>	8/10	PSM15
<i>Actua Soccer</i>	9/10	PSM3
<i>Adidas Power Soccer</i>	8/10	PSM6
<i>Goal Storm</i>	8/10	PSM2
<i>FIFA '97</i>	7/10	PSM15
<i>Striker '98</i>	8/10	PSM2

Official UK
PlayStation
Magazine 15

Dated graphics spoil an otherwise perfect package. Many readers won't get past *ISSD*'s sadly antiquated looks. Make sure you're not one of them.

8
out of 10



The power-ups add to the original game without overpowering it, as often happens with '90s updates of old games. [2] Yes indeed. [3] Did we mention the power-ups? [4] Er... [5] Etc. [6] The two-player mode is hectic and strange. [7] A close-up.

Tempest X

This **souped-up** shoot 'em up is a far **different animal** to its predecessor, being hailed as a 'shining, glittering, malevolent titan of a game' that could be the **one of the finest** in its genre



Nine? For this? You might need some convincing on this one. For a start, static magazine screenshots aren't the best medium for displaying the overwhelming sensory assault you're subjected to in *Tempest X*. And you may possibly be the kind of idiot who insists that a game's no good unless it's making the maximum possible use of every hardware facility available to it. (Yeah, just like *Tetris* did. And *Super Mario World* really pushed the SNES to its very limits, didn't it?). So we'll get straight to the point.

This is one of the most all-out, heart-pounding, nerve-tearing, sense-dazzling thrills that you'll ever get from a videogames machine. You might have thought *Wipeout 2097* was fast and exciting (and hey, it is), but it can feel like a ride on a milk float compared to this. *Tempest X*'s predecessor (the Atari Jaguar's *Tempest 2000*, or *T2K*) was rightly acclaimed by one magazine at the time as 'The Game Of The Decade', but this purer, colder, harder new breed has had a massive overhaul and respray, and now even *T2K*'s awesome benchmark looks a little staid by comparison. *Tempest X* has more levels (128 compared to 100), fiendish new web designs (clearly constructed by people who knew

[1] There's something funny going on with these pictures. [2] You might be excused for thinking that the whole game looks like this. Because it does.



exactly what made the original game tick, too), evil new enemies, techno-tastic new music, and shattering new sounds; and most of all, dizzying new visual pyrotechnics that'd make

Jean-Michel Jarre at his most extravagant cough and look a little embarrassed. Do we sound excited? Good.

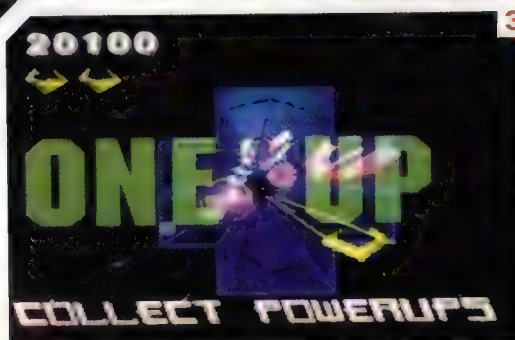
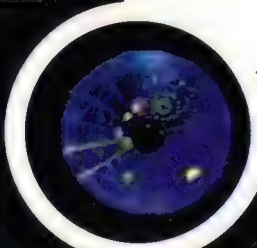
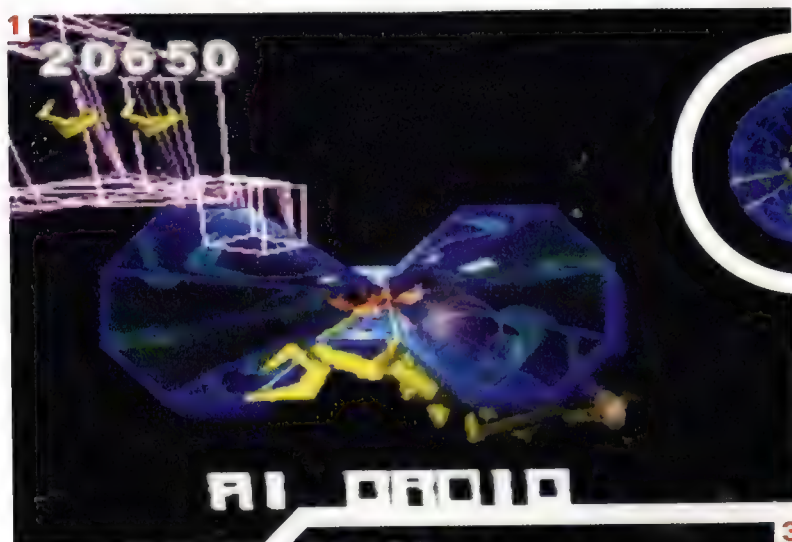
Still, enough hyperbole. Let's answer some criticism. 'But it's just a 15-year-old shoot 'em up with some flashing lights and nosebleed techno.' Sigh. So what?



[1] Like eyes that follow you around the room aren't they? [2] Now that's a bit more like it. [3] Back on those power-ups again. [4] We even like the Game Over screen on this game. Apart from the fact that it means the game is over. [5] This isn't the same picture as [3]. Look closely.



■ PUBLISHER:	Interplay	■ DEVELOPER:	High Voltage
■ RELEASE DATE:	Out now	■ ORIGIN:	United States
■ PRICE:	£44.99	■ STYLE:	Shoot 'em up



[1] Some of the webs from the original *Tempest*, which were lost in *T2K*, make a welcome return in *TX*. [2] Including the fantastically evil figure-of-eight web, which isn't pictured here. [3] ...*None Down*, a little-known comedy sequel starring John Alderton. [4] Ah... if only you could collect 2000 power-ups.

This is one of the most all-out, heart-pounding, nerve-tearing, sense-dazzling thrills that you'll ever get from a videogames machine

Eric Cantona's twice that age, and he's just George Best with a skinhead. Anyway, *Tempest X* adds so much to the original gameplay that it's hardly recognisable. Genius is timeless. 'But it's 128 screens of the same thing - it's so repetitive.' In *Ridge Racer* you just drive around and around in circles. What's your point? 'But it's not going to impress my mates when they come round.' Ha. Turn the lights off, crank the sound up to

full, switch to Trippy Mode and watch their minds melt out of their eyesockets. Then ask them if they're impressed. Yes, it's abstract. But it's also beautiful. If you want to look at real life, look out of your window.

'But with everything going off all at once, you just can't see what's happening.' No. Nothing ever happens in *Tempest X* that you can't see. It does, however, demand every last nuance of your concentration. Take your eyes off it for a millisecond and it'll run you down like a juggernaut. You'll need all your reflexes, all your co-ordination, all your senses and all your skill. But not luck. 'But it looks rubbish. It's just lines.' Please go away and fall under a bus.

There's some other stuff to point out here - you also get a version of the original *Tempest* (better than the Jaguar's version of the original, but still not as good as the real thing), and a slight-but-smart two-player game. The music is fabulous, and the whole thing loads in one go at the start, so you never have to see the dreaded 'Loading...Please Wait'. There is no 'plot'.

But these are fripperies and technicalities. This shining, glittering, malevolent titan of a game is one of the best shoot 'em ups ever created on any format. It's arguably one of the best game ever created full stop. It may well not be a hit. It's your decision. It'll be your loss.



[1] They just won't let that power-up thing go will they? [2] See what I mean? [3] It make not look fun... [4] but rest assured... [5] that it is.



Alternatively...

To date there is nothing remotely like *Tempest X* on the PlayStation.

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:	Trippy 8	■ GAMEPLAY:	Total 10
■ SOUND:	Nerve-shredding 9	■ PRESENTATION:	No loading! 6
■ LIFESPAN:	Longer than you 9	■ ORIGINALITY:	Not any more 4

One of the fastest, hardest, most intense and exciting games you'll ever play, whatever the format. And the PlayStation version is no exception.

9 out of 10

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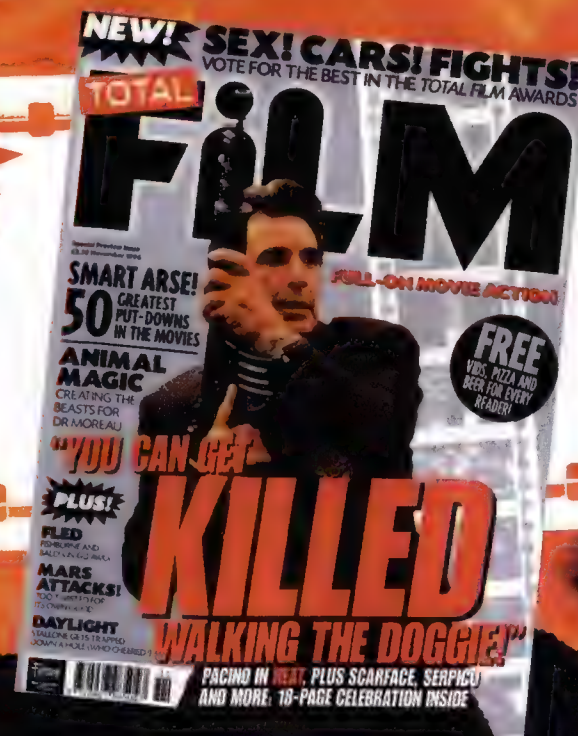
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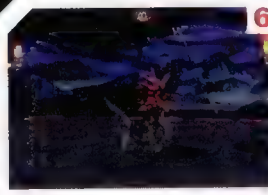
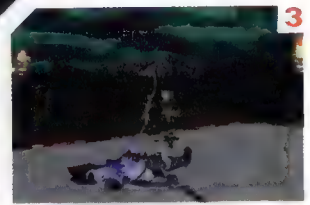
Teletext
ON ITV & CH4

ON CH 4
PAGE 621

PUBLISHER: Acclaim DEVELOPER: Take 2
 RELEASE DATE: Out now ORIGIN: United States
 PRICE: £44.99 STYLE: Beat 'em up



(1) Choose from one of 16 role-playing pugilists.
 (2) We can't tell you the characters' names because they're not written, nor can you decipher the silly voice. (3) You can develop the fighters' skills as you progress. (4) Here's a bear. (5) The Stonehenge setting. (6) Handbags at dawn. (7) Pitch the might of the sword against fire. (8) A green elf with two swords. Honest.



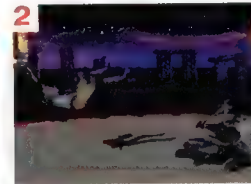
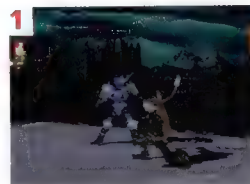
Iron And Blood

A gathering of role-playing characters from
Advanced Dungeons & Dragons? To do battle? Why, yes

One could almost get fed up to the back teeth with fighting games. Hardly a month goes by without a pugnacious fellow popping his head round the door. In the last couple of months we've had *Street Fighter Alpha 2*, *MK Trilogy*, *Robo Pit*, *Star Gladiator* and *Power Move Wrestling*. Can they ever sate our thirsts for the battler, and how many takes can you have on the one genre?

Iron And Blood is a beat 'em up, only it has a cunning twist. You see, Acclaim has been out and purchased itself a licence – a licence to show off a gaggle of role-playing characters from the *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*, Ravenloft world. The idea here is that you develop the skills of the characters as you progress through the game: **the more hardened a warrior you become, the more extra weapons and spells you add to the armoury.**

The presentation is a little odd, to say the least. None of the characters (16 in all) are actually named – you only find out who they are once you've picked one, and a barely audible, gruff voice bellows the name.



(1) The burning flame at each side of the screen represents how much energy the fighters have left. (2) Stonehenge is just one of the many backdrops for fights.

Even with a list of names in front of you, it's really tough to pick out what Mr Gruff actually says. Very poor all round. 'See me', in red biro, Take 2.

Visually it's pleasant if patchy – not nearly in the class of *Toshinden* or *Tekken*. The characters are detailed, there are backdrops galore (Stonehenge being one venue) and whole show shifts at a decent speed. Add to this the weapons, projectiles and various spells the chaps can totter out, and you've got the choice ingredients of a more-than-competent beat 'em up.

So why is *Iron And Blood* not much fun? Why has everyone who's played the game shrugged indifferently when asked to comment? The problem is that it's rather too fiddly for its own good. The character reactions are not particularly sharp and the controls are nasty. You can get horribly stuck at the side of the ring – each time you try to stand up you either get battered or lumped against the electric current. Yes, there are lots of interesting characters but our friends in Japan make much better fighting games.

Visually it's pleasant if patchy...

The characters are detailed, there are

backdrops galore and the whole

show shifts at a decent speed

VERDICT

GRAPHICS: Okay. Not *Toshinden* 6 GAMEPLAY: A bit fiddly 5
 SOUND: Terrible speech 4 PRESENTATION: No names 3
 LIFESPAN: Plenty of fighters 6 ORIGINALITY: RPG? Guess so 6

Alternatively...

<i>Star Gladiator</i>	8/10	PSM14
<i>Toshinden 2</i>	7/10	PSM7
<i>Iron And Blood</i>	5/10	PSM15

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An interesting take on the beat 'em up, with characters from *Dungeons And Dragons*, but the appeal is really for the American market.

5

Not as slick as *Star Gladiator*.

out of 10

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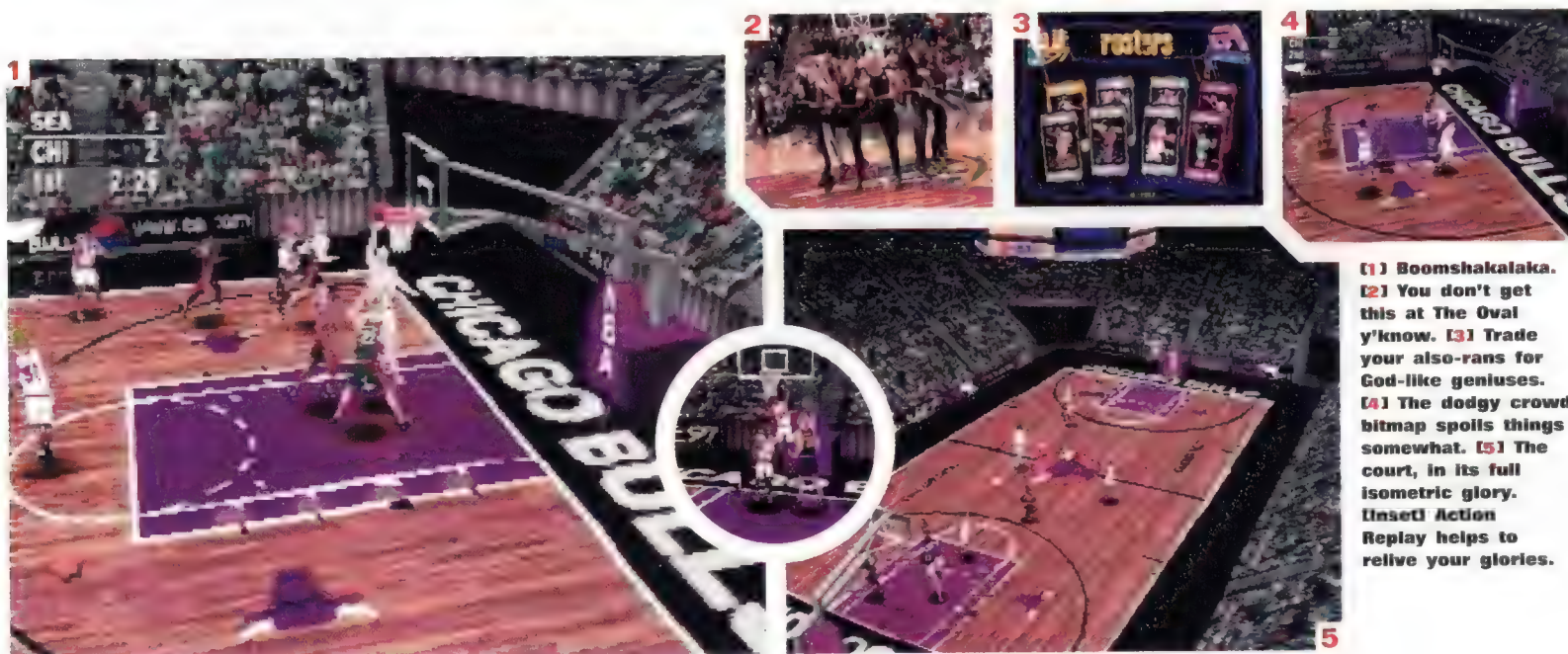
■ PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts ■ DEVELOPER: EA Sports
 ■ RELEASE DATE: Out now ■ ORIGIN: United States
 ■ PRICE: £44.99 ■ STYLE: Basketball



PlayTest

NBA Live '97

The players are **all giants** and they seem to **score once every five seconds**. It can only be **basketball**, really



[1] Boomshakalaka. [2] You don't get this at The Oval y'know. [3] Trade your also-rans for God-like geniuses. [4] The dodgy crowd bitmap spoils things somewhat. [5] The court, in its full isometric glory. [Inset] Action Replay helps to relive your glories.

For sheer consistency of effort, EA Sports must be one of the top games houses around. Rarely do they come up with a turkey, just continuing to churn out disc after disc of quality, simulation software. Equally, though, it's not often that they come up with a complete blinder. *NBA Live '97* fits exactly into that profile. It's a slick and well-produced basketball sim but it won't set the PlayStation world on fire. If anything, it's a classic EA Sports title; good gameplay backed up with more stats than you can shake about 7ft worth of Shaq O'Neill at.

The actual ball-dribbling and hoop-hanging component is, as ever, spot-on and governed by a bewildering array of options with three possible levels of play – arcade, rookie and simulation – all realised in full isometric 3D polygon glory. On attack, you control the player in possession; in defence, you can cycle the team to gain control of whoever you need to. The players respond swiftly to your touch and while you could wish for some better AI routines for the computer-controlled elements of your side, it's eminently credible gameplay.

The in-game graphics are fine in general – though the bit-mapped crowd spoils the look of the thing – and look even better in Action Replay mode. The game's

Statto rides again

In common with most EA Sports stuff (and most American sports), *NBA Live* is totally obsessed with stats. Almost every factor of the gameplay is variable and after every quarter you're presented with a detailed breakdown of what's happened.



[1] The end-of-1st-Quarter stats. [2] More stats. [3] And even more stats. Yawn.

main attraction, however, has to be the NBA data. It's here that *NBA Live* verges into management-sim territory, allowing you to transfer players, trade them and generally change the complexion of any of the teams.

Beyond that, though, *NBA Live '97* doesn't really have anything to recommend it above any other basketball game. It's well presented enough, aping the American TV coverage in a very convincing way and making occasional use of ultra fast-cut FMV, but it doesn't have anything to elevate it on to another plain. Brilliant, no. Above average, certainly. Old Faithful does it again.

Alternatively...

Total NBA '96	9/10	PSM3
NBA Jam:TE	8/10	PSM1
NBA Live '96	7/10	PSM6
NBA Live '97	7/10	PSM15



VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS: Generally good **6** ■ GAMEPLAY: Smooth **7**
 ■ SOUND: Atmospheric **6** ■ PRESENTATION: Convincing **7**
 ■ LIFESPAN: Until *NBA Live '98* **7** ■ ORIGINALITY: Not much **5**

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NBA Live '97 is a convincing enough basketball sim but it's just shy of greatness. Thoroughly recommended for NBA freaks, though.

7
out of 10

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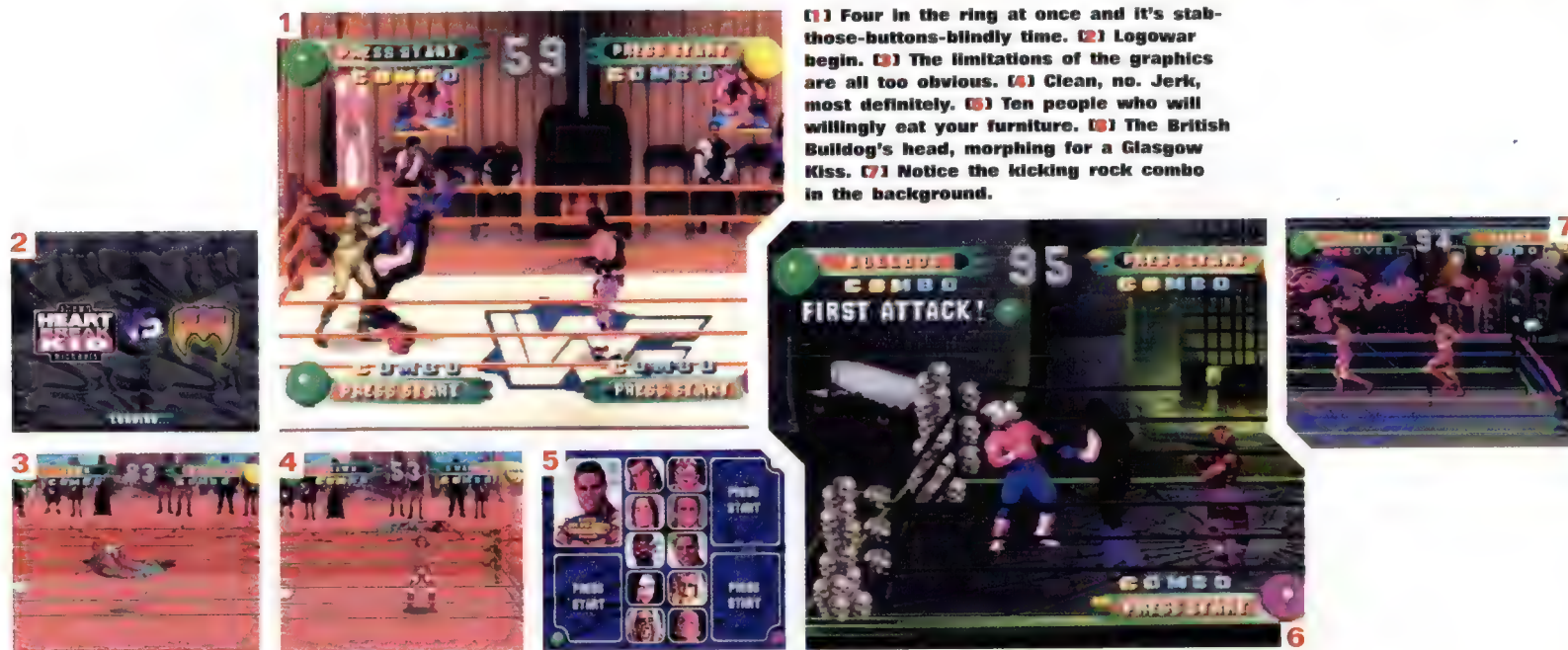


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PUBLISHER: **Acclaim** DEVELOPER: **Sculptured Software**
 RELEASE DATE: **January '97** ORIGIN: **United States**
 PRICE: **£44.99** STYLE: **Beat 'em up**



[1] Four in the ring at once and it's stab-those-buttons-blindly time. [2] Logowar begin. [3] The limitations of the graphics are all too obvious. [4] Clean, no. Jerk, most definitely. [5] Ten people who will willingly eat your furniture. [6] The British Bulldog's head, morphing for a Glasgow Kiss. [7] Notice the kicking rock combo in the background.

WWF: In Your House

Prepare yourself for house guests who smell of sweat, leave make-up stains on your wallpaper, have a tendency to shout banzai, leap off your sofa and land on your cat

Wrestling might have dropped all pretence of being a sport and reinvented itself as entertainment; a brutal, staged choreography featuring men in costume, in make-up and probably on steroids, beating each other into a bloody pulp. Underneath it all, though, it's still the same old end-pier tacky showcase of a couple of men hamming it up in the ring. And the thing that wrestling in real-life has in common with *WWF - In Your House* is that if you strip away the energetic hyperbole, the remnants are depressingly familiar.

Against the current crop of fighting software - especially the glorious Tekken 2 - In Your House looks and plays like a very poor Mega Drive title. For a start, it's sprite-based which, apart from bringing back the odd stray memory, seems to be commercial suicide. It's not even as if they're particularly well-drawn ones either, a fact that you eventually realise after squinting at the screen for a few minutes. Squinting? Yes, you may gather from this that they are a bit on the small side.

Essentially it's a 2D game too. You can move along the z-axis to the front and rear of the ring but it hardly counts as free movement - just sidling along one plane at a time. This makes it rather difficult to get a good rock on, it being exceptionally tricky to work out

sometimes which plane your opponent's strutting his stuff on and leading you to perform an excellent flying drop-kick only to land flat on your be-spandexed arse.

A sim it's not, the British Bulldog's head turning into that of a dog when he chins someone, and power-ups appearing randomly in the ring. Unfortunately, though, the mechanics of the fighting are sloppy. The developers have obviously gone for a cartoony, slapstick feel but you can't escape the feeling that it's more of a button-stabbing event than one that calls for any skill. There is a learning curve, but it's not a very satisfying one.

There are 10 available wrestlers, each of whom has 10 special moves, and three types of tournament.

Unsurprisingly it's much better in two-player mode, but even then it's only ever mildly diverting, a warm-up for a main event and another game. Die-hard WWF fans will probably love it - the sheer daftness and hype comes across well - but anyone simply looking for another beat 'em up is advised to pass along the shelf.

Meet some of the chaps



[1] Shawn Michaels. Can't spell his own name. [2] British Bulldog. Fights with Beefeaters hollering in the background. [3] The Ultimate Warrior. Also the ultimate customer at the Boots make-up counter.



Alternatively...

WWF Wrestlemania	8/10	PSM2
Victory Boxing	8/10	PSM14
WWF: In Your House	5/10	PSM5
Power Move Pro Wrestling	4/10	PSM14

VERDICT

GRAPHICS:	Mediocre 5	GAMEPLAY:	Out of date 4
SOUND:	Raucous 6	PRESENTATION:	OTT 6
LIFESPAN:	Not brilliant 5	ORIGINALITY:	Not here 4

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The WWF in all its stupid glory, but unfortunately the game itself is basic and languishing about three years behind the times - back in the 16-bit era at least.

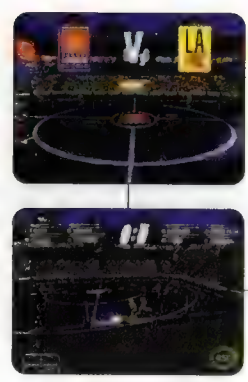
5
 out of 10

Riot

Futuristic sports games, eh? Not at all like buses, but somehow you wait ages for one and then suddenly two of the buggers appear. After *Pitball* last month, this time we're having a *Riot*



(1) Eight players can take part in the action at any one time, causing much gaming merriment. (2) Say no more. (3) We want four. (4) The 'radar' screen, as we've called it gives you a bird's-eye view of the action. (5) The 'ball' looks great. (6) Recognise anyone? (7) Great views throughout.



Some years ago, an infamous gang of coders called the Bitmap Brothers wrote a splendid futuristic sports simulation called *Speedball* and then followed it with a regal sequel, a game that still brings a waggle to the joystick of many an Amiganoid. It basically melds a number of sports and drops them in a rink where you charge around like a mad thing bashing people and scoring goals. *Speedball* works, though, because it concentrates on being a 'sport' rather than simply being an excuse for extreme violence in the name of a team pastime. Many futuristic sports games since have fallen into the trap of including far too much repetitive thuggery and very little in the way of decent sporting gameplay. **Indeed, the presumption that we'll suddenly forego football and cricket to spend our days smashing each other to pieces in the name of sport is curious. Maybe computer programmers have seen one too many re-runs of *Rollerball*.**

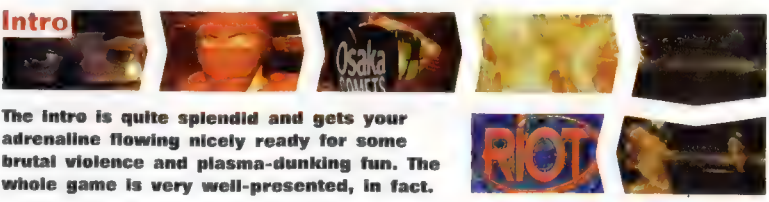
Riot most certainly doffs its cap to *Speedball*, but to a new generation of gamers, comparisons with *Pitball* (reviewed in our last issue) will be most obvious. It's set in a rink and the idea is to throw a plasma ball into a rotating goal which floats above the arena. Obtaining and maintaining possession of the ball is done by any means, fair or foul, and the whole thing is rather like a rough version of basketball with only

one net. So far so good. Even better is the fact that up to eight friends can take part at once with the aid of a trusty multi-tap.

Action is fast and furious, and all viewed from various magnificent views. Really, there can be no complaints as the game is well thought out and excellently executed. Ultimately, however, you don't really care as there simply aren't enough hooks to keep you interested. Yes, you'll have a laugh with a big group of mates but, unlike a football, tennis or a golf game, this won't keep the lone player happy in the long term. Yet again a futuristic sports games is filed under 'almost, but not quite'.

Alternatively...

<i>Riot</i>	7/10	PSM5
<i>Pitball</i>	7/10	PSM4



The intro is quite splendid and gets your adrenaline flowing nicely ready for some brutal violence and plasma-dunking fun. The whole game is very well-presented, in fact.

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:	Excellent 8	■ GAMEPLAY:	Reasonably exciting 7
■ SOUND:	Atmospheric 7	■ PRESENTATION:	Very professional 9
■ LIFESPAN:	Limited appeal 6	■ ORIGINALITY:	Have you seen <i>Pitball</i> ? 4

In gaming terms, it may not be a riot but it's certainly a reasonably-sized scuffle. Fun with a group of eight but not one you'll be playing alone for too long.

7
out of 10



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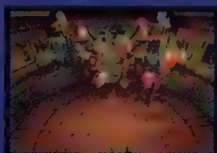
TOP SECRET

This month we offer a guide to beating the bosses in the brilliant but baffling *Crash Bandicoot* and reveal exclusive playing tips for *Wipeout 2097* and *Final Doom* among others

CRASH BANDICOOT

PAPU PAPU

Papu Papu is the first and easiest boss. He is a grossly overweight native warrior chief who will attack Crash in two ways: first he will spin round and round, trying to hit Crash with his huge club, then he will stop spinning and bring down his club over his head to hit Crash with an almighty blow. To beat him, simply jump on his throne to keep out of range while Papu is spinning, and jump out of the way when Papu tries to strike Crash. Then jump on his back. Return to the throne and repeat the process until Papu Papu is pulped!



left platform and wait for the blue blighter to jump from the bottom-middle to the middle-left. Once again, leap on to the TNT and retire back to the top-left platform. Watch for Ripper to jump off the middle-left on to the top-middle and then make Crash jump to the safety of the middle-left away from the third blast, which should see off the aggravating antipodean marsupial.

KOALA KONG

Patience and some nimble jumping is the key to beating this muscle-bound boss. Place Crash to the bottom-left of the screen and when Koala Kong throws a rock, jump over to the right to avoid it, then jump back to the left. Soon one of the rocks that Koala throws will stay on screen (usually the fourth rock that is thrown). Instead of bouncing away, Crash must wait until there are no carts in front of Koala and then spin the rock at Koala, hitting him in the stomach. Repeat this and you will soon be triumphant.



RIPPER ROO

This completely crazy kangaroo is pretty tricky to beat, but this is by far the easiest way. Wait until he jumps to the middle left platform. Jump to the middle, then the left middle platform. Now wait until Ripper jumps back to the middle, then bottom right, then back to the middle, then bottom left. When he jumps to the middle again, get Crash to jump on to the TNT.



Go to the middle, then on to the middle-right platform. When the roo goes back to the middle, he will be blasted by the TNT. Get Crash to jump to these platforms in this sequence: top right, top middle, top-left, and middle-left. Wait for Ripper to jump upon the middle-right platform and jump on the TNT next to you, then back to middle left to watch Ripper Roo get blown up a second time. From the middle-left platform, Crash should now jump to the top-



PINSTRIPE POTOROO

This kangaroo mobster is out to avenge his cousin, Ripper Roo, who you beat up earlier. He is also the hardest boss in the game. Pinstripe will run, jump and somersault all over the room, laughing hysterically and constantly trying to fill Crash with lead from his machine gun. The only safe place for Crash to hide is in the bottom-left and right-hand corners. The only time to attack is when Pinstripe stops firing, or when his gun jams - then you can hit him two or even three times, but this takes perfect timing. Hit him once and



while he is still stunned, hit him again. Never attack Pinstripe in the back of the room, as Crash will never make it back to his safe corners. Patience and timing will soon win the day.





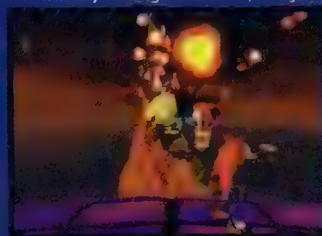
DR. NITRUS BRIO

This mad doctor will attack Crash in two phases. First he will throw test tubes at him. The purple test tubes are explosive and the green ones will turn into slimy green blobs that will chase Crash around the room. It is a simple matter of jumping on the green blobs to kill them and jumping out of the way of the explosives. Once again, the bottom left and right corners are a safe haven. When his energy is getting low, the doctor will drink one of the test tubes and turn into a monster. Slabs of concrete will fall from the ceiling – leap from these on to the monster's head. Three hits on the head will be enough to get this mad doctor struck off the medical list for good!



DR. NEO CORTEX

Considering this is the final boss in the game we were surprised at how easy it is to beat him once you have learned how. The thing to remember is the purple energy bolts that he throws at Crash will fly straight at him, so jump past them. The



blue bolts will go from left to right, or right to left, and some move diagonally. The green energy bolts should be spun into, which will then hit the good doctor and

take one part of his energy bar away. So avoid the purple and blue bolts, spin into the green bolts and Crash will soon be reunited with his beloved gal, Tawna.



INTERNATIONAL TRACK & FIELD

PLAYING TIPS

"Who will be number one in the world?" asks the announcer before each event in Konami's *International Track & Field*. Well you will be if you follow our guide. So slip into some impossibly small lycra shorts and let's go through each event.

100m

Pretty obvious this one. Simply hit SQUARE and CIRCLE as fast as is humanly possible, but the all-important thing to remember is to press X just before you reach the finish line so that your athlete will dip, enabling you to pip your opponents in true Linford Christie style.



100m Hurdles

Once again, this involves more hammering of the SQUARE and CIRCLE buttons – but make sure you allow plenty of time to hit the X-button to clear the hurdles.

Long Jump

The speed of your run-up to the foul line is the most crucial factor here. Hit the SQUARE and CIRCLE buttons until your athlete is one stride away from the foul line, then press the X-button until you reach a 45° angle for an impressive record-breaking jump.

Triple Jump

Approach the Triple Jump in much the same way as the Long jump except when you reach the foul line, press the X button to jump then tap it again as you jump down for the second jump. Press and hold the X button until you hit a 45° angle.

High Jump

Run as fast as you can to the bar and then press and hold X to leap over the bar. Don't forget to release the X-button as soon as you have cleared the bar.

Pole Vault

One of the trickier events this one, where your timing is crucial. Approach the line rhythmically,

pounding the SQUARE and CIRCLE buttons. The pole will automatically plant itself. When you are at the apex of your jump, press the X-button to get your athlete's body over the bar, then release X to kick your legs over.



Hammer

Start your athlete spinning by quickly hitting the SQUARE and CIRCLE buttons. On the forth spin, press and hold the X-button until you reach that magic 45° angle. Let go and watch the world record tumble!

Javelin

Press the SQUARE and CIRCLE buttons to get as much speed up as possible before reaching the start line, then press and hold X until the angle meter reaches 45° before letting fly with your javelin. Steve Backley, eat your heart out!

Discus

Press SQUARE and CIRCLE rapidly to start spinning, much the same as you did in the Hammer event. This time, on the second spin, press and hold X. Release the button when the angle meter reaches 45°.

Shotput

For an almighty throw, quickly tap the SQUARE and CIRCLE buttons as your athlete approaches the front of the circle, then press and hold the X-button until the counter reaches 55.

100m Freestyle

Getting off to a good start is vital in this swimming event. On the word 'Go' press SQUARE to dive in, then keep hitting SQUARE and CIRCLE at a good fast pace. Upon reaching 50m, press X to turn your athlete around and kick off the wall to start going the other way.



CHEATS AND SECRETS

Dinosaur in crowd

In the Shotput, try to get a score that has the same four numbers – ie 11.11m or 22.22m. If you do this, a massive dinosaur can be spotted in the crowd.

UFO crash

Throw the javelin at full power with a higher-than-60° angle and a UFO will crash into the stadium with a javelin protruding from it!



Mole

In either the Long Jump or the Triple jump event, perform a jump that has the same last three digits – ie 15.55m. If you manage this a little mole will suddenly pop up from the ground.

Bikini swimsuits

To change the swimming costumes in the 100m Freestyle, before you select the event enter: UP, UP, DOWN, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT, X, CIRCLE.

Space shuttle

To make a space shuttle appear during your third jump in the Pole Vault, do the following. Qualify with your first jump, raise the bar by more than 40cm and then clear it.

Konami airship

In the High Jump event, clear the first jump, raise the bar more than 40cm, then clear that jump. On your next jump you will see the Konami airship floating above the stadium.

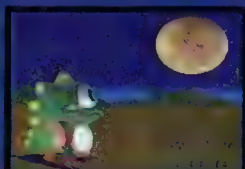
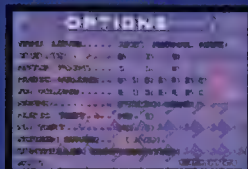
Balloon release

While doing the Hammer event, try to get a score where the first two numbers match the second two numbers – ie 54.54m or 64.64m. If you manage to achieve this, the crowd will celebrate by releasing hundreds of balloons into the air.

Cheats

BUST A MOVE 2

Thanks goes out to **Gary Jackman**, of Eltham, for supplying us with the below cheats for the excellent *Bust A Move 2*.



Extra credits

On the Options screen, enter: **LEFT, RIGHT, R1, R2, L2, L1, UP, DOWN**. Then rapidly press **X** and watch your credits rise. It helps if you have a turbo pad. It is possible to go up to 30 credits.

Another world mode

At the Selection screen, enter: **R1, UP, L2, DOWN**. The little green wizard character will appear in the bottom-right of the screen to let you know that the cheat has worked. The single-player 'STORY MODE' should now read 'ANOTHER WORLD' which contains different, more challenging levels.

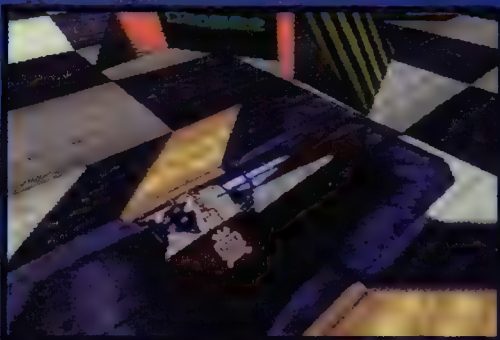
Character select

To choose a new character to play as, begin a puzzle game. While on the Map screen, enter: **LEFT, LEFT, UP, DOWN**. Then press **L1 + L2 + R1 + R2**. A new Character Select screen will appear. Press **LEFT** or **RIGHT** on the D-Pad to cursor through the characters. Press **X** to continue.

WIPEOUT 2097

Race with the piranha

Thomas Stokes, of Highbury, has sent us this great cheat for *Wipeout 2097*. Watch out for our full guide to *Wipeout 2097* next month.



On the Options screen, select password and then enter this as your code: **SQUARE, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, SQUARE, CIRCLE, CIRCLE, CIRCLE, X, CIRCLE, X, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE, SQUARE**.

ADIDAS POWER SOCCER

Thanks to **Don Stewart**, of Airdrie, for sending in this daft cheat for *Adidas Power Soccer*. During a friendly match in Arcade mode, pause the game and select **AUDIO**. Highlight 'Commentary' then press **SQUARE** and **CIRCLE** at the same time. Press **RIGHT** to find a new and highly amusing FEM option, which is basically two fishwives moaning about what your players are doing on screen!

FADE TO BLACK

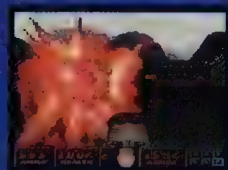
Here are some interesting cheats for Delphine's *Fade To Black*, supplied by **Chris Stevens**, of Upton. To begin with, you must enter the cheat activation code, which is **SQUARE, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE, X, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE**. Leave the password screen and re-enter it again straight away. Ignore all the 'Invalid Code' messages. Now to play all the movies enter: **SQUARE, X, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE, X**. For infinite shields enter: **SQUARE, CIRCLE, CIRCLE, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, X**. For invincibility, enter: **TRIANGLE, X, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, SQUARE, CIRCLE**. For a level select enter: **CIRCLE, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, X, SQUARE, SQUARE**.



FINAL DOOM

Tony Baxter, from Sudbury, has kindly sent in the following codes for *Final Doom*, along with some great cheats:

LEVEL 2 Y90CDJLHVX
LEVEL 3 3JICMK8W64
LEVEL 4 Y9S3VRWWW
LEVEL 5 IDDSQ7J38
LEVEL 6 04MSK2X921
LEVEL 7 YTTLCXKLXV
LEVEL 8 09SM8Y04YW
LEVEL 9 7KKBLDV53
LEVEL 10 FM4217GSCJ
LEVEL 11 H113WDGLD8
LEVEL 12 07QPDW26WY
LEVEL 13 WLLTXOY02
LEVEL 14 RBR4C/LDLN
LEVEL 15 2PTLCXXLXV
LEVEL 16 548C7DFWYX
LEVEL 17 JOC89DZPQS
LEVEL 18 JCB9CT0NRT
LEVEL 19 9QITKRO02
LEVEL 20 LM85X1358D
LEVEL 21 S6JFHVQJG
LEVEL 22 33QHFTT6WY
LEVEL 23 VBCQPJ446
LEVEL 24 ZYKTLW7V53
LEVEL 25 0DJSM4HW64
LEVEL 26 MDF0SBI8HG
LEVEL 27 ZDJSMVRW64
LEVEL 28 1YKTX4QV53
LEVEL 29 J7K438DMNL
LEVEL 30 DJX07Q4HTR



To activate the cheats below, simply pause the game and input the codes. You can combine the cheats by inputting one code, continuing the game, then pausing the game again and entering the next code.

MAP ALL THINGS **△** **△** **L** **R** **L** **R**
R **R** **○**
LOTS OF GOODIES **×** **△** **L** **↓** **↑** **R**
← **←**
LEVEL WARP **→** **←** **R** **L** **△** **L**
○ **×**
X-RAY EYES **L** **R** **L** **R** **→** **○**
△ **→**
ALL-POWERFUL MODE **↓** **L** **○** **R**
→ **L** **←** **○**

Cheats

Send your cheats and tips to: **Top Secret, Official UK PlayStation Magazine, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW**. If we print your cheat, we will of course credit it to you.

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On the CD



Well, this has to be a turn-up

for the books — five playable

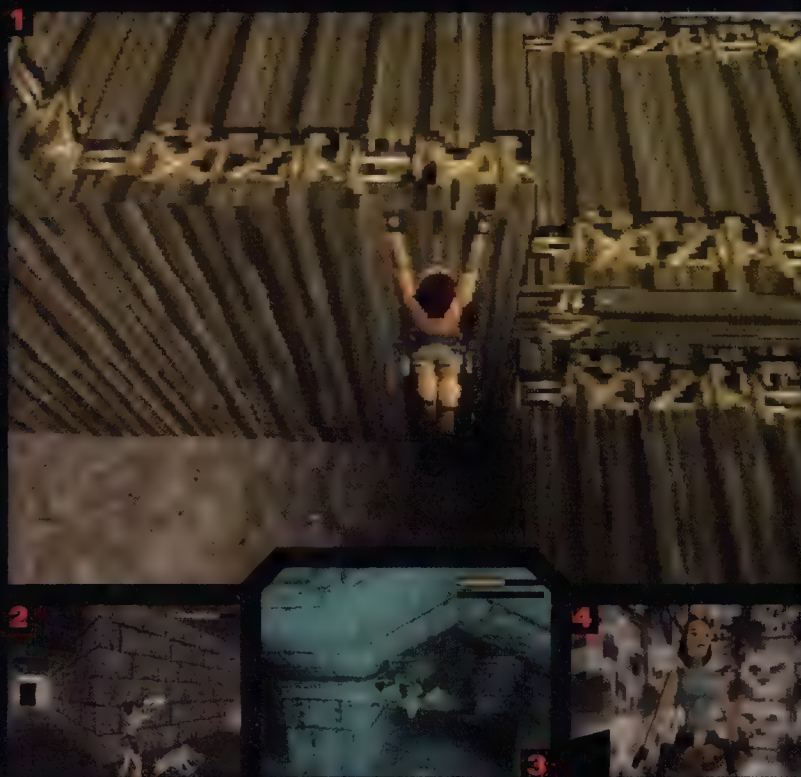
demos on one solitary disc.

FIVE. And they're all utterly

brilliant. Then again, you

wouldn't expect anything

less from *PSM* really...



[1] Lara's iron grip will save you from plummeting toward a very serious injury. [2] If you're approaching a life-threatening situation, the music will change to indicate the impending danger. [3] Lara may be a bit of a mermaid in the water, but she's not an immortal one! [4] Lara Croft. What a gal!

Tomb Raider

■ PUBLISHER:	Core Design
■ STYLE:	3D adventure
■ PROGRAM:	Playable demo

Here it is — hard, irrefutable evidence that *Tomb Raider* is indeed the best 3D adventure game you are likely to behold.

Explore the entire first level of *Tomb Raider*, revelling in the expansive environment as you unearth its secrets, face its dangers, and still have time to admire its beauty. Don't expect this to be an easy ride, though — you have chasms to leap, blocks to push, switches to pull and pools to swim in, if you are to reach your goal.

■ Controls

On dry land...

- ↑ Run ← Rotate left
- ↓ Hop backward → Rotate right
- Diving roll
- 'Action' button (used to fire guns when drawn, grab ledges when jumping, or pull switches)
- + ↑ Push blocks
- Jump (Follow quickly with X to grab hold of ledges)
- + ↓ Somersault backwards
- Draw guns / holster guns

- R + ↑ Walk slowly forward
- R + ○ + ↑ Dive forward
- L Activate independent camera (move using D-pad)
- L Side-step left
- R Side-step right
- ▶ Pause
- SELECT Call up inventory (Use D-pad to rotate inventory 'wheel')

In the wet...

- ↑ Swim down ← Swim left
- ↓ Swim up → Swim right
- Breaststroke
- Pull levers and switches
- L Shimmy left when on the surface
- R Shimmy right when on the surface
- + ↑ To climb from pool

■ Additional features

The full version has 16 levels.

■ Further information
Tomb Raider received 10/10 plus a StarPlayer accolade in *PSM13*.

Reloaded

■ PUBLISHER: Gremlin
 ■ STYLE: Shoot 'em up
 ■ PROGRAM: Playable demo

A review of a brand new game just doesn't get better than this. Not only can *PSM* give you the very first review of Gremlin's anticipated sequel to the best-selling *Loaded*, but we can also give you your first 'hands-on' experience. An exclusive first review and exclusive playable demo in one issue – beat that for a package.

So let's cut the banter (there's plenty of that on page 72). Just load the disc, turn on your little grey machine and let your trigger finger do the talking...



All facets of the final game are on show in this demo from briefing to intro, player line-up to all-out carnage.

■ Controls

Although the game features six characters, you can only play as Mamma, the Big Baby, in this demo. He's quite slow, carries a BBS weapon, and his special attack is a Seismic Tantrum. You can customise the controls to suit your needs, but we have listed the default configuration for ease:

- Fire
- Ultra Bomb
- Run
- Toggle map
- L ○ Strafe
- R ○ Zoom

■ Additional features

Although the demo allows you to change the volume of the game's SFX and music, the other features outlined on the Options screen are unavailable here. In the full version you can play around with the CD tracks, select the number of lives and continues, toggle friendly fire on/off, opt for a two-player game, save and load missions, and play through all six characters.

■ Further information

Turn to page 72 of this issue for an exclusive review of the game.

Porsche Challenge

■ PUBLISHER: SCE
 ■ STYLE: Racing game
 ■ PROGRAM: Playable demo

In this demo you can race on the Stuttgart track, the idea being to make it to the two checkpoints dissecting the track before the timer runs down. Be warned: as this demo is incomplete there are a few graphical and audio glitches, and the handling is very light, making it easy to oversteer.

■ Controls

You can change the viewpoint with L1 & L2, but the game can bug out badly, so it's best to stick with the chase angle.

- Accelerate
- Horn
- Reverse
- Brake
- L ○ + L ○ Change viewpoint

■ Additional features

In the final version you'll find an Arcade or Championship mode, two different drivers, various difficulty settings, levels of enemy strength, and automatic or tiptronic transmission.



(1) Watch the rolling demo... **(2)** ...or take on the Porsche challenge. **(3)** Feel the wind in your hair as you belt round the track at 160mph!

Adventures Of Lomax

■ PUBLISHER: Psygnosis
 ■ STYLE: Platform
 ■ PROGRAM: Playable demo

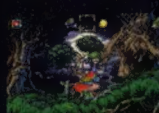
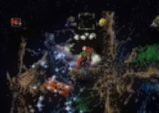
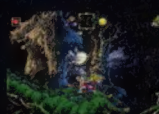
Lomax sees a change of direction for the suicidal Lemmings, thrusting them into an alien 3D environment and seeing how they fare as platform stars. You are in control of the hero, Lomax, as you bound over gaping chasms to save your Lemming chums from an undead life as zombies. And to accomplish this, a simple belt round the head with your magic hat is all that's required. So, in the words of the Lemmings themselves, 'Let's Go!'

■ Controls

- Jump (Press twice for Hurricane spin)
- Throw hat
- L ○ Look up
- L ○ Look down
- Pause

■ Additional features

In the full version, look for bridges which appear to go 'into' the background. You can jump on to these and continue your adventure on a different plane of parallax.



It may look cute, but it certainly isn't cuddly... Lomax can be a bit of a platform headache.

Pandemonium

■ PUBLISHER: BMG
 ■ STYLE: Platform
 ■ PROGRAM: Playable demo

Looks can indeed deceive. It wasn't until we actually loaded our master disc of CD 15 that we realised the *Pandemonium* demo withheld a surprise bonus: not only do you get a fully playable romp through the first stage of BMG's excellent 3D platformer, you also get a sneak preview of two other forthcoming games from *Pandemonium*'s creators, Crystal Dynamics. The said titles are *Blazing Dragons* – a wacky point and click adventure in the vein of *Discworld*, created by Monty Python's Terry Jones – and *Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain* (PrePlay, page 28) which is based on the renowned vampire-infested AD&D role-playing system, *Ravenloft*. Not bad, eh? Look for playable demos soon.

But on to *PSM14*'s cover star, *Pandemonium*. A quirky 3D platformer which, we believe, surpasses *Crash Bandicoot* by miles and steals his hallowed platform crown in the process. See if you agree as you ogle at the rendered intro, then take control of either Nicki or Fargus and guide them up and over *Pandemonium*'s plethora of polygonal platforms and parapets. Phew!

■ Controls

You can customise the controls on the Options screen for both characters, but we have listed the default settings:

- Fargus
- Jump
- Fire bonus weapon if in possession
- Special spinning attack
- Nicki
- Jump (press twice quickly for extra height)
- Fire bonus weapon if in possession

■ Additional features

To kill the enemies, simply stomp on their heads, or collect the pink Fireball bonus and shoot them. Collect the heart bonuses to boost your health, and the coins to buy your way to an extra life. Search high and low for secret ledges and platforms. In the full version the later levels become extremely inventive, with all levels offering at least three different routes to the exit as well as a host of secret bonus rooms.

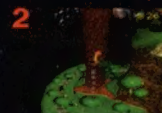
■ Further information

The game scored 9/10 and was labelled a StarPlayer in *PSM14*.



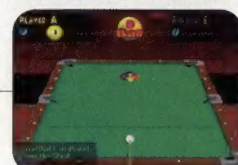
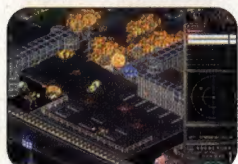
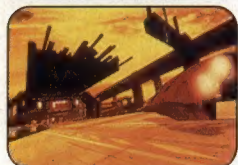
Don't worry!

These programs are pre-production versions of finished games. If they crash or bug-out, simply reset your PlayStation and reload. No harm done, eh?



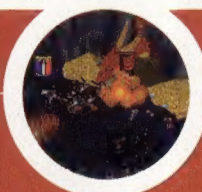
(1) Gore aplenty in a trailer for *Legacy Of Kain*. **(2)** Platform pandemonium. **(3)** It's a rendered intro.

We race into **1997** with **previews** of **Porsche Challenge** and **Wreckin' Crew** and **reviews** of **Cool Boarders** and **Monster Trucks**. We also take a first look at **Syndicate Wars** and **Spider**. And we give our verdicts on **Road Rage**, new office favourite **Virtual Pool**, and **Bedlam**. As it's a new year, look out as well for some **brand new features** in your favourite magazine. **All will be revealed...**



Next month CD

The highlight of next month's CD is an exclusive *Warhammer: Shadow of the Horned Rat* playable demo that Mindscape have coded especially for us. You won't find it anywhere else and so fans of the game would be advised not to miss it. Also on disc 16 will be playable demos of *Victory Boxing*, which we gave a StarPlayer award last month, plus *Onside* and *Disruptor*. Sounds too good to miss.



Come
and have
a go...



Official UK
PlayStation
Magazine 15

Reloaded (Gremlin)